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OPINION METER

This week's poll:
Do you support the call to delay the implementation of federalization in the CNMI by 180 more days?

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158 without a
government
budget for
FY 2009
DAYS

INSIDE



Health Care

President Obama pumped health care allies and skeptics alike for ways to overhaul the nation's costly and frustrating system.

NATION...Page 10



Brown Arraigned

Chris Brown briefly appeared in court Thursday, hours after he was charged with two felonies.

LIFE & STYLE...Page 20

NMC posts 122 potential graduates for Spring '09. PAGE 2
70 students face off in mock trial contest. PAGE 3

\$60M-\$80M hotel breaks ground



HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, center, leads the shoveling of dirt at the groundbreaking for the \$60-\$80 million Flame Sako Resort and Spa in As Matuis yesterday morning. From left, Public Lands Sec. John DelRosario, Flame Sako Resort and Spa president and chief executive officer Kang Dae Sik, Fitial, Saipan Mayor Juan B. Tudela, and Lt. Gov. Timothy P. Villagomez.

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

The \$60 million to \$80 million Flame Sako Resort and Spa yesterday began construction on a 109,003-square meter area in As Matuis, at a time when many businesses have been closing or reducing operations due to the local and global economic turmoil.

"Through this resort project, and through this groundbreaking today, of the CNMI's tourism market, and we are here to support Flame Sako's Flame Sako is betting on the future

See \$60M on Page 4



HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial delivers brief remarks at the groundbreaking ceremony for the Flame Sako Resort and Spa in As Matuis yesterday.

Poll: Public fears about troubled economy growing

ON THE NET

AP-GfK poll: <http://www.ap-gfcpoll.com>

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

WASHINGTON (AP)—As the economy continues to struggle, the public is growing increasingly concerned about losing jobs, not having enough money to pay the bills and seeing their retirement accounts shrink, according to an Associated Press-GfK poll.

Nearly half of those surveyed said they worry about becoming unemployed—almost double the percentage at this time last year.

The poll released Wednesday also

See POLL on Page 4

FIRST HOMICIDE VICTIM THIS YEAR

Man in coma after attack dies

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

A Palauan man who was in a coma after being attacked possibly by two men last

week passed away Thursday afternoon, according to the Department of Public Safety yesterday.

DPS now classifies the death of Ligardo Omisong as a homicide, making it the first

homicide case in the CNMI this year.

As of yesterday, no suspect has been arrested yet.

DPS spokesperson Lei Ogumoro said the 44-year-old Omisong died at the Commonwealth Health Center, where he was in a coma since the incident hap-

See MAN on Page 4

BOE urges IR teachers, staff to apply for immigrant status

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The chairperson of the CNMI Board of Education is urging all Public School System employees with immediate relative, or IR, status to process their papers



Blanco-Maratita

now so they could be granted immigrant status and qualify to stay within the system.

Lucy Blanco-Maratita told *Saipan Tribune* this, following concerns raised by school administrators that the anticipated enforcement of federalization

in June may affect their personnel, including classroom teachers.

PSS earlier disclosed that there are 96 personnel who fall under the IR category. Many of them have been employed with the system for several years. They include teachers, support staff, and teacher-

See BOE on Page 4

Local

NMC posts 122 potential graduates for Spring '09

BY MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The Northern Marianas College has so far recorded 122 potential graduates for the Spring semester and the number may increase in coming days until all petitions are submitted to the college's Office of Admissions and Records.

The figure was the total number of petitions received by the college as of yesterday.

A breakdown of the number indicated that the associate degree in liberal arts got the highest petition of 31, followed by the associate degree in elementary education, which recorded

29 potential graduates in May.

Other graduates by degree and certificate program include:

- associate in nursing, 20;
- certificate of completion in early childhood education, 13;
- associate in applied science in business management, 10;
- accounting, 6;
- criminal justice, 4;
- business, 2;
- computer application, 2;
- achievement in construction trades, 2;
- hospitality management, 2;
- and
- certificate of completion in related services, 1.

NMC president Carmen Fernandez said the college is

extremely proud of this year's potential batch of graduates.

"The NMC family is extremely proud of the students who will be graduating in May. They have worked so hard and have made so many sacrifices to accomplish their educational goals," she said.

Fernandez vowed to assist the graduates in their search for jobs or to further their education in higher universities.

"We will be working with each graduate to provide them with whatever assistance they need for their transition to full time jobs, or for some, a transition into a four-year university," said

Fernandez, adding that she looks forward to joining the graduates and their families at the graduation ceremony.

She expressed hope that the new graduates will be active members of the NMC Alumni Association.

Saipan Tribune was told that the final number of graduates will be known by next month.

'42 potential honor students'

NMC expects 21 potential honor students to be recognized in May.

From the associate degree, seven will be awarded the cum laude honor or those who have

See NMC on Page 4



BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Belated birthday greetings go out to Jerome Jr. who celebrated his 9th birthday on Feb. 27; to Francisco, who turned 2 on Feb. 14; and to Ikeesha, who turned 3 yesterday, March 6, 2009. We love you! From your family.

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70 students face off in mock trial contest

BY MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

About 70 students from both private and public high schools yesterday demonstrated their knowledge and skills in the legal system at the preliminary rounds of this year's mock trial competition, held at the Susupe courtrooms.

Event coordinator Karen Klaver was elated at the initial turnout of the competition that saw the participation of eight teams in the Commonwealth.

"Our expectation is to get the most qualified team to represent us in the national level. So far, NMI has been getting better every year in the national and ...we're ready to have a good show for 2009," she told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday.

This is the 11th year of the competition and revolves around a fictitious issue involving assistant attorney general Kelley Abogado,

who has been charged with murder in the first degree for killing unsavory criminal defense attorney Jesse Day.

Mount Carmel School represented the CNMI at the 2008 national contest in Wilmington, Delaware, where Leticia Cabrera was distinguished as one of the top ten most effective students among all the states, territories, and countries that competed.

"Our high school students have spent months working with their teachers and attorney coaches in preparation for their participation. This year's champion will have the chance to represent the CNMI in Atlanta, Georgia," Klaver said.

The mock trial programs are designed to give students an inside perspective on the legal system, providing them with an understanding of the mechanism through which society chooses to resolve many of its disputes.

Besides understanding and knowledge of the legal system, Klaver said that students are also able to develop teamwork, camaraderie, self-esteem and how to speak publicly.

In determining the best two teams for the championship round, a strict guideline was established by the organizer—CNMI Bar Association—which assesses individuals through a rating scale from 1-10 during the direct and cross examination of witnesses as well as their performanc-

es on their closing arguments.

Today is the scheduled championship round for the contest.

'A bit difficult'

Klaver said this year's event is a bit difficult for the association because of fewer volunteers and donations from sponsors, coupled with the conflicting schedules of volunteer attorneys for the school groups.

However, she said the association hopes to continue the competition on island.

She said the champion team

will be sent to the national contest through the assistance of the Public School System, which applies for a federal grant involving school competitions. The association will shoulder the travel expenses of coordinators to the event.

"We just hope to continue. It truly depends if we can get enough volunteers and schools interested in doing the competition," Klaver said, adding that it costs the association less than a thousand dollars to hold the local event.

She admitted that student winners may get less prizes this year but the association is appreciative

of all its sponsors and donors.

Expectations

With Mount Carmel School as the defending champion, former principal Galvin Deleon Guerrero is confident that the CNMI will be represented by the most qualified and best team in the national event.

"All eight groups are the best teams in the CNMI and we want to be represented by the best... that's why I am glad that the caliber among all the teams is high. My expectation is being fulfilled that every team is solid and so far that's what I am seeing in these initial rounds," Deleon Guerrero said.

Tinian High School attorney coach Lucy Blanco-Maratita pins her hopes on the group that has been the competition's champion five times: 2000-2003 and 2007.

"Everybody will do a great job...because they know the materials and are very enthusiastic and committed about it," she told *Saipan Tribune*, adding that "We'll sure give it a try [to win back the title]."

Blanco-Maratita has been with the group since its beginning and she agreed that participating in the competition brings a lot of help among students.

For first-time participant Raetissha Iglesias from Tinian High School team, it feels great to be in the competition.

Like her colleagues, she vowed to do her best to bring back the honor for the school team.

DEQ cites firm over open dump

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

The Division of Environmental Quality has issued a notice of violation and cease and desist order against a private company for operating an open dump in violation of environmental law and regulations.

DEQ acting director David B. Rosario, in a Feb. 24 notice of violation, ordered United Construction Corp. to cease and desist all collection and storage of solid waste on site and to remove all solid waste from the site within 30 days after receipt of the notice.

Rosario said failure to comply with the notice of violation may result in the issuance of and administrative order and civil penalty.

DEQ is authorized to assess a maximum penalty of \$25,000 per violation for each day of the continuance of the violation.

On Feb. 19, DEQ solid waste enforcement officer Gregorio Reyes conducted a solid waste compliance inspection at the UCC compound in Chalan Laulau.

The office observed that solid waste, including home appliances, household waste, cement bags, computer monitors, television, household waste, and junk vehicles had been disposed of at the site, but there was no evidence of solid waste burning.

DEQ said UCC's ownership and/or operation of the open dump is in violation of the Solid Waste Management Act and the Solid Waste Management Regulations.

The division also ordered UCC to submit a final written notice to DEQ that all solid waste has been removed from the site, and provide receipt to DEQ showing proper disposal of the solid waste.

Man allegedly beats up girlfriend, assaults mother

A man allegedly repeatedly punched his girlfriend and then assaulted his mother who had tried to stop the beating at a residence in As Matuis last weekend.

Elvin C. Kani, 31, was arrested Wednesday night for assault and battery, and disturbing the peace.

Kani was taken to the Superior Court Thursday afternoon.

Associate Judge David A. Wiseman set a \$20,000 cash bail for Kani's temporary liberty.

The victim suffered a black eye and was transported to the Commonwealth Health Center for treatment. She told police it was not the first time her boyfriend beat her up.

The girlfriend said she believes her 2-month-old daughter has health conditions as a result of domestic violence when she

was pregnant.

Detective Katherine M. Manglona stated in her report that Kani, the victim, and their baby were on their way home from a party in Tanapag last Saturday night.

While in their car, the defendant brought up the victim's past then began slapping and punching her several times in the face and arm.

When they reached their house, Kani allegedly continued beating up his girlfriend, repeatedly punching her on the face and rib cage.

Detective Manglona said Kani's mother told police that when she tried to stop the beating, he pushed her.

The mother said she was hit on the lips, causing her pain. (*Ferdie de la Torre*)



SPEAKERS ALL

Current House Speaker Arnold I. Palacios, right, poses with former speakers, from left, Rep. Diego T. Benavente, Pedro R. Deleon Guerrero, and Rep. Oscar M. Babauta.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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Fiji rejects Commonwealth suspension threat

SUVA, Fiji (AP)—Fiji's military leader scoffed Thursday at the Commonwealth's warning it would suspend his country from the bloc if he fails to move toward democratic elections in the coming months, insisting he would not comply any time soon.

Commonwealth foreign ministers on Wednesday said Fiji would be fully

AP

In this April 30, 2004 file photo, Fiji's military commander, Commodore Frank Bainimarama attends the funeral of former Fiji President Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara in Suva, Fiji.

suspended from the group of Britain and its former colonies at its next meeting in September if "sufficient progress" toward the restoration of democracy not take place.

It was the latest increase in international pressure to compel Commodore Frank Bainimarama to end the military rule imposed after he seized power in a 2006 coup—Fiji's fourth in 20 years.

"If they want to suspend Fiji this coming September they can do it now," Bainimarama told New Zealand's Radio Tarana on Thursday.

"No one is going to interfere in what we are trying to do, not New Zealand, not Australia, not anybody else. Nothing is going to be done. There's going to be no election," he said.

Bainimarama says he wants to call elections only after he has changed the constitution and rewritten electoral laws. He reneged on a promise made to a bloc of Pacific nations to hold elections by April, and now says the reform process could take a decade.

The 16-member Pacific Islands Forum has threatened to suspend Fiji if Bainimarama fails to name an election

timetable by May.

Bainimarama said he expects Commonwealth Secretary General Kamalesh Sharma to call him in the next few days, and that he would tell the official that there will not be elections this year in Fiji.

Fiji is already frozen out of the Commonwealth's meetings because of Bainimarama's coup. Full suspension would have little effect aside from cutting off the already limited flow of aid the country receives from the 53-nation body.

Fiji has often seen its Commonwealth membership restricted. It was first suspended in 1987 following a coup led by Lt. Col. Sitiveni Rabuka.

POLL

From Page 1

found public support dipped slightly in the past month for the \$787 billion package of tax cuts and government spending President Barack Obama signed into law this week on the promise that it will save or create 3.5 million jobs and re-ignite the economy.

"I lost a job myself," said Edd Winkler, 40, a married attorney and father of two in Grand Rapids, Mich. "There were just too many attorneys for the amount of work we had coming in to the firm at that time." Winkler has opened his own practice, and says most of his work involves bankruptcies.

"I know a lot of other people who have lost jobs," he added.

Mariann Lewis, 55, of Stewartstown, Pa., says she was laid off this month from her job in a grocery store's deli department.

"It's pretty sad when a food store lays people off," said Lewis, who is married. "It's not like people are going to stop buying food."

Lewis said she didn't work there long enough to qualify for unemploy-

ment, and her family has begun using credit cards to pay for expenses, including a relative's funeral. "We went through all of our savings," she said.

Winkler and Lewis are among those who are increasingly worried about their personal economic circumstances, according to the poll.

Nearly half of those questioned, 47 percent, worry at least somewhat about losing a job, up from 28 percent in February 2008. Nearly three-fourths, or 71 percent, say they know someone—a friend or a relative—who has lost a job in the past six months because of the economy.

Fear of being thrown out of work is so widespread that equal percentages of higher- and lower-income workers, 47 percent, worry about losing their jobs. Last year, only 20 percent of those earning \$50,000 or more annually worried about joblessness, as did 35 percent of those earning less than that.

Nearly two-thirds of people, 65 percent, are at least somewhat worried about paying their bills, up from 46 percent last year.

More than two-thirds, 69 percent, worry that the value of their stocks and retirement investments will drop, up

from 59 percent a year ago.

More than half, 53 percent, aren't confident they'll have enough money to live comfortably in retirement, up from a third, 34 percent, in February 2005.

Dean Verinder, a 40-year-old Houston engineer who fears declining oil prices will cost him his job, said he's saving money these days.

"I'm not putting any money into the stock market," he said. "I was lucky. I pulled all my money out before it crashed."

Support for the economic stimulus plan, which Obama signed Tuesday, was at 52 percent, compared with 55 percent last month.

Winkler said he wasn't confident the program would create jobs, and thinks that those it does create will be low-paying.

"Until we can somehow keep jobs here and create actual real paying jobs, not Wal-Mart greeter jobs, those things won't work," he said.

Risa Stoller-Black, a 24-year-old married homemaker from Wapato, Wash., said the stimulus package would create jobs.

"I don't see how it couldn't, if there's money to employ people," said Stoller-

Black, who has a 4-year-old daughter. "It's just disappointing that we have to get to this point in the first place."

About a month into his new job as president, Obama's approval rating was at 67 percent, a slight dip from the 74 percent he received before his Jan. 20 inauguration. By comparison, just 31 percent approved of Congress' job performance, up seven points from December.

In other findings:

■ Nearly two-thirds, or 62 percent, think Obama is making about the right amount of effort to cooperate with Republicans in Congress on solving the country's economic problems. About the same percentage, 64 percent, think the GOP isn't doing enough to cooperate with the Democratic president. Despite courting Republicans during ne-

gotiations on the stimulus bill, it passed with no GOP votes in the House and just three GOP votes in the Senate.

■ People don't think much of last year's \$700 billion bailout for the financial industry. Nearly half, or 47 percent, say it had no real effect on the economy, and about a third, or 32 percent, say it actually made things worse.

The AP-GfK poll was conducted Feb. 12-17 and involved landline and cell phone interviews with 1,001 randomly chosen adults. The margin of sampling error was plus or minus 3.1 percentage points.

Associated Press Polling Director Trevor Thompson and Associated Press writer Christine Simmons contributed to this report.

NMC

From Page 2

at least a 3.5-3.74 GPA; 7 magna cum laudes or those who maintained 3.75-3.95 GPA; and 7 summa cum laudes, or those with outstanding mark of 3.96-4.0 grade point average.

For the bachelor's degree, NMC will name 12 cum laudes and nine magna cum laudes.

'Graduation committee'

To ensure the smooth conduct of the commencement rites, the graduating class will be forming a committee that will be tasked with organizing the

venue and selecting student leadership recipients, of whom one will be named each from BS and AA degrees.

The committee, *Saipan Tribune* learned, is also tasked to select the keynote speaker for the event. Last year, the rite was keynoted by Bank of Guam president and board chair Lourdes Leon Guerrero.

"The Office of Admissions and Records is doing all the work necessary to ensure that graduating students meet the criteria necessary to graduate," the office said, adding that graduating students have already begun ordering their caps and gowns and other materials they will need for their graduation ceremony.

MAN

From Page 1

pened. The cause of death was said to be subdural hematoma.

Ogumoro said that Guam chief medical examiner Dr. Aurelio Espinola was expected to conduct last night an autopsy on the victim.

"DPS investigators are requesting the assistance of community members to please call the Criminal Investigation Bureau at 664-9045/55 or Crime Stoppers if they have any information regarding this crime," Ogumoro said.

According to a police report,

Omisiong was found lying on his back on the main road in front of Leo Poker in San Jose early Friday morning, Feb. 27.

Police officers responded to the scene after they received a call about a disturbance at 3:22am.

A witness told responding police officers that he heard screams from outside his home and when he checked, he saw the victim lying unresponsive on the roadway.

The witness saw two men running north toward San Jose Mart.

The victim, who was later identified as Omisiong, had been in a coma since then due to major head injuries.

BOE

From Page 1

aides, and assistants.

"If we have some 90 staff at the system that may be affected by this concern because they can't continue work for PSS, then obviously we need to make sure we need to have those classrooms covered," she said yesterday.

Although the issue hasn't gone up to the board yet, Blanco-Maratita said that Education Commissioner Dr. Rita Sablan is aware and is now assessing the matter.

"At present, the commissioner is aware of the issue and will make recommendations for actions to the board if there's a need to," she said.

The chairperson, however, encouraged these IR personnel to start working on their papers to prevent the potential impact to the system.

Board policy dictates that non-im-

migrant or non-U.S. citizens cannot be employed by the system.

Department of Homeland Security representatives earlier disclosed that the IR status may not be considered when federalization comes in.

A federal office that will assist the islands' IRs will be established this month.

A fee is required to apply for U.S. visas, a concern raised by several IRs who failed to process their papers for many years.

When asked on possible financial assistance that may be offered to employees who may have financial concerns in processing their visa applications, Blanco-Maratita said PSS may not be able to accommodate such need.

"Probably not...Just like everybody else, we want to encourage them to work on their papers so that by the effective date, they are able to stay in the CNMI and work at PSS," said.

The board official cited the limited funding being received by PSS from

the local government, which would prevent them from providing such assistance to IRs.

"I don't believe that's something PSS can do...Immigration is a different issue. I can't say that the board will not do it, I just don't think it's something we can do at present," she added.

Blanco-Maratita mentioned the incentives and benefits being provided teachers who are diligently working on their HQT requirements and credentials, including salary rates of up to \$47,000.

"We're giving incentives as a means of encouraging teachers to become more effective and more efficient. Our goal is to improve them so that our students will also improve based on their excellent teaching," she said.

PSS is currently operating on a \$35 million budget, the bulk of which goes to personnel's salary. It has over 1,000 employees, including those funded by federal programs.

as a six-star hotel with 357 rooms.

Public Lands Sec. John DelRosario said the project also includes a large water park, and a convention center that can accommodate 500 people.

Kang Dae Sik, president and chief executive officer of Flame Sako Resort and Spa, through a translator, expressed appreciation to the government and the community for supporting the investment.

He told *Saipan Tribune* that the project construction will last for 20 months

The governor urged all permitting and regulatory agencies to expedite the processing of permits to complete the project.

"This project's success affects our Commonwealth's overall economic progress and the livelihoods of our local residents. This project will create jobs, attract tourists, bring more revenue into our economy, and provide more funding for government operations," Fitial added.

Flame Sako Resort and Spa is planned

from yesterday.

Other government officials and business leaders at the groundbreaking ceremony lauded the Korean firm for braving the tough economic times to build a hotel and villa, just north of The Palms Resort.

Saipan Mayor Juan B. Tudela, in his brief remarks, said the time is drawing near for the CNMI to see the kind of economy it had two decades ago, when demand for more hotel rooms was needed.

"Hopefully, in the very near future

we are ready to see another shining star when Flame Sako Resort and Spa will rise on this site where we are standing today," he said.

The governor, in his remarks, also said that Flame Sako seems to understand the sentiment of legendary investor Warren Buffet: "Be greedy when others are fearful and be fearful when others are greedy."

The Legislature approved on Feb. 4 Flame Sako's land lease agreement with the Department of Public Lands.

\$60M

From Page 1

faith in our market, as demonstrated by this significant long-term investment commitment," Gov. Benigno R. Fitial said in his remarks at yesterday's groundbreaking ceremony.

Fitial said the CNMI is grateful for Flame Sako's confidence in the local market, and the government stands by this investment commitment.

SHANGHAI DAY 4 AND 5

Fleeting fame

By KRISTI EATON

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REPORTER

I've noticed there are significantly fewer Westerners in China compared to other countries.

This makes it feel like China is a little less influenced by Western culture, or, as I learned at dinner Wednesday night, it's not that the Western culture hasn't come to China; most people just choose to ignore it, preferring their own traditional ways.

But with her flaxen hair, slender build, and striking features, my travel companion, KSPN2 TV reporter Lannie Walker, is the epitome of Western culture. During the five days of the trip so far, she has received numerous stares, several accented attempts at "hello," and a few requests for photographs.

While walking down Nanjing Road, a man and woman finally deemed me Western enough to join Lannie as she posed for a picture with each of them. It was awesome. I was a celebrity for 10 seconds. But fame, I've learned, is fleeting, and the two tour guides pulled us from the eager picture takers.

Without my tour guides (or saviors as I sometimes feel about them), Nomi and Wonder, I think I would be lost in this country of 1.3 billion. No one speaks English. Of all the countries I've been to, Mexico, in my opinion, seems to be the only country that has fewer English speakers. This isn't bad. In fact, I know I'm spoiled when I can travel to any country and get by not knowing a single word of their native tongue, but I have gotten used to it nonetheless. I thought I knew two Chinese words—hello and thank you—that would go a long way in attempting to navigate this place. To my surprise, I learned that for the last five days I've been pronouncing "thank you" incorrectly. No wonder my attempts at gratitude usually resulted in a look of confusion or a fit of giggles.

At one point, I dared to venture out on my own in search of chapstick. I reverted back to the international language of hand signals. I puckered my lips and put on imaginary lip gloss. The

store worker acted as my reflection and made the exact same movement, before leading me to a row with every brand of chapstick imaginable. I can never go wrong with miming, although there are only so many things I can act out with my hands.

Earlier in the day, the four of us headed to Century Park in the Pudong Area, where we decided to ride a four-person bike—two seats in the front and two in the back. I was appointed the steerer of the bike. I was a tad nervous. Visions of crashing a golf cart while an intern in college came flashing back. But, apparently, pedaling and maneuvering a four-person bike is not beyond my capabilities, and 30 minutes later I parked the bike with three healthy, non-injured passengers.

The Peace Hotel was one place I couldn't wait to see on my last day in Shanghai. Many

Muhammad Ali have stayed there. As I drove by I discovered it was under renovation—major renovations in fact. A little peek inside was out of the question.

I felt a bit like Clark Griswold



The Expo 2010 exhibition featured information and displays on past World Expos, including the 1964 New York City fair and the 1937 Paris fair.



The four-person bike.



A statue to China's first Chairman.

famous celebrities and dignitaries like Charlie Chaplin and

in the 1983 film *National Lampoon's Vacation* (my favorite movie, by the way). The Peace Hotel was my Walley World.

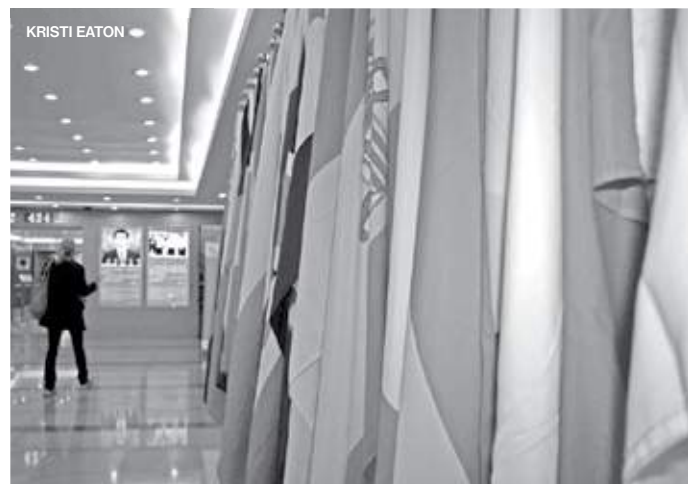
It was OK, though, because I was able to experience true Americana during lunch. There were forks, paper napkins, and unlimited refills of Coke Light(!). Life was good.

And it continued into the night as I worked toward one of my many goals of the trip—to try as

many exotic foods as possible (and take a picture of it).



Outside Plaza 66, one of the nicest malls in Shanghai with hundreds of designer stores.



Flags from across the country are lined up outside an exhibition on the World Expo 2010 that will be held in Shanghai.



Bullfrog. Delicious.

The food of choice was bullfrog, and it was delicious. Using chopsticks continues to be a struggle, and I was self-conscious as I ate in front of strangers for the first time, but it wasn't going to stop me from my goal.

A few hours before, I asked Lannie about my lack of chopsticks skills.

"It's endearing, right?" I asked about my embarrassing attempts to use the wooden sticks. She laughed. Maybe not so much.

Ricky Gene Manglona
P.O. Box 511791,
Rota, MP 96951
Telephone No.: 788-6448

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION FOR CHANGE OF NAME OF:
RICKY GENE MANGLONA

Petitioner.

FCD-CN
CIVIL
ACTION
NO.
08-0613R

NOTICE
OF
HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for hearing on March 27, 2009 at 10:30 a.m. in Courtroom Rota before Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo.

/s/ Bernadita A. Sablan
Clerk of Court

TRAINING on ZONING

How Does it Affect Your Sign, Business Location or Building, Adult Business, Subdivision of Land or Home Construction?

The Zoning Office will provide training on the Saipan Zoning Law. The public is invited. There is no fee and no need to make a reservation.

March 10 at the Multipurpose Building, Susupe

- 9:00 am Signs and banners - for retailers and others
- 1:30 pm Adult businesses - for adult business owners - massage parlors, strip clubs, porno shops, etc.

March 12 at the Multipurpose Building, Susupe

- 9:00 am Overview of the Saipan Zoning Law of 2008 - for developers and the general public
- 1:30 pm Land subdivision - for surveyors and others who are subdividing property

Questions? Call the Zoning Office at 234-9661.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950Lynn A. Knight PUBLISHER
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Mark Rabago ASSISTANT EDITOR

MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Fixing our schools

Count us as among those who worried that the economic stimulus plan's huge infusion of new money for education would produce only more of the same failed programs. So it was heartening to hear Education Secretary Arne Duncan describe an unacceptable status quo of broken schools in this country. Not only does he aim to use stimulus dollars to drive reform, but Mr. Duncan envisions this moment as the start of a historic opportunity to dramatically improve the education of children.

"Our job, my job is to fight for kids," Mr. Duncan told Post editors and reporters this week as he sketched his plans for the more than \$100 billion in new stimulus spending and his ambitions for U.S. education. He made clear that school systems in search of the new federal dollars must be willing to pursue his agenda for change and that his reforms will be built around programs with proven records of success. Refreshingly blunt in describing a "crisis" in education, Mr. Duncan lambasted the system of 50 different states setting 50 different standards for student achievement. He is right to call it a "race to the bottom" in which neither parents nor students know where they stand in relation to the rest of the country, much less the world. Mr. Duncan is not prepared yet to require national standards, but he made clear that a single set of standards, aligned for college readiness and benchmarked to international standards, is where the country needs to be headed.

Equally exciting is his push for improved student assessments as well as sophisticated data systems to track the effectiveness of teachers and the education schools that produce them. Mr. Duncan, former head of Chicago's public schools, has firsthand knowledge of the challenges faced by schools and of what works. For example, he knows that students need more time in schools—and that "talent matters," so schools have to reward excellence, put the best teachers where they are most needed and get rid of bad teachers. He realizes that it's important to reward everyone who is involved in helping a school succeed. But he's learned that there are bigger differences in teacher performance within schools than between schools.

We admire the fact that Mr. Duncan has absolutely no use for those who would use the social ills of poor children as an excuse for not educating them. "They are part of the problem," he said with disdain, arguing that education is the best way to end poverty. No doubt there will be opposition to his ideas from those traditionalists accustomed to the status quo. But Mr. Duncan made clear that his only interest is in what works.

(c) 2009, The Washington Post



'Let Special Industry Committees set wage hikes'

Editor's Note: The following is the full text of the letter that CNMI Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, American Samoa Gov. Togiola Tulafono, and American Samoa Delegate Eni Faleomavaega sent to Interior Secretary Ken Salazar; Sen. Daniel K. Inouye, chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee; Rep. George Miller, chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee; Sen. Edward Kennedy, chairman of the Senate HELP Committee; and Sen. Jeff Bingaman, chairman of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We are writing to request the Administration's support in re-establishing Special Industry Committees to determine federal minimum wage increases in American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands until such time as the Government Accountability Office can assess the impact of past and future increases and report back to Congress no later than April 15, 2010, as mandated by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

For your information, P.L. 110-28 mandated an automatic increase of 50 cents per hour effective July 2007 and every year thereafter until 2014 for American Samoa, and 2015 for CNMI. Recognizing that neither CNMI nor American Samoa had the local capacity to provide Congress with the hard statistical data it might need, P.L. 110-28 also mandated the U.S. Department of Labor to undertake a study to determine what impact these increases might have on both economies.

On Jan. 25, 2008, DOL released its findings. The findings show that neither economy can sustain these increases. Also, the DOL reported that "by comparison, if U.S. minimum wages were increased to the level of the 75th percentile of hourly-paid U.S. workers, that the adjusted wage rate would be \$16.50 per hour."

Despite these findings, the Senate HELP Committee and the House Committee on Education rightly stated that they were not pleased with the study undertaken by the DOL and, therefore, would not support deferments or rollbacks. While we understood the Committees' concerns and acknowledged that there may be disagreements about a report issued by a previous Administration, we did not believe then and do not believe now that either economy should be placed in jeopardy just because the DOL failed to accomplish its mandate.

This is why we worked to request a new study. This year, as a result of these efforts, Senator Daniel K. Inouye, Chairman of the

Senate Committee on Appropriations, with the support of Senator Jeff Bingaman, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, made certain that language was included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act directing the GAO to conduct a new study and report back to Congress no later than April 2009, which was to provide us with a window of opportunity, if necessary, to defer the third increase scheduled for July 2009, pending the outcome of the GAO's findings. Regrettably, in the final conference report, the due date of the GAO report was changed from 2009 to 2010. It is my understanding that the Senate was not responsible for altering the due date of the report.

Certainly providing the GAO with more time to complete its study will yield a report that is more thorough, and we support this outcome. However, given the serious implications this change in date may hold for American Samoa and CNMI, by way of separate letter we are writing to Chairman Miller and Senators Inouye and Bingaman to request their further help and assistance in offering an amendment to the FY09 Omnibus appropriations bill that will reestablish Special Industry Committees until Congress can be provided with the information it needs to make a responsible decision about both economies. To date, it is our understanding that Congress will not defer minimum wage until it has more reliable data.

The irony of this situation is that, on the one hand, Congress is insisting that it cannot defer minimum wage because it has no data. On the other hand, Congress is automatically increasing minimum wage year after year with no data to justify its actions. In fact, no Congressional hearings were held prior to the enactment of P.L. 110-28 about the impact automatic increases might have on the economies of American Samoa or CNMI. After the fact, a field hearing was held, at our request.

Also, prior to enactment of P.L. 110-28, we asked that Congress bring CNMI under American Samoa's umbrella and work with us to reform Special Industry Committees. After enactment of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, Industry Committees were established to phase low-wage industries in to the minimum statutory wage making American Samoa, as well as all other U.S. Territories, exempt from mainland minimums but bound by minimums determined by Special Industry Committees. At the time, Congress believed that application of mainland minimum wage rates to ter-

See LET on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY

The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, Century Insurance Building, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

What's the big idea?

By **CARLOS LOZADA**
(C) 2009, THE WASHINGTON POST

With the American superpower trapped between two wars abroad and economic crisis at home, the time could be ripe for a new force to assume the mantle of global leadership.

How about Bangladesh?

It's not as nutty as it sounds. Economists Vijaya Ramachandran and Enrique Rueda-Sabater propose a simple system for deciding who gets to run the world. Call it the Two Percent Doctrine: If your country has either 2 percent of the planet's people or 2 percent of the world's gross domestic product, you're in, a

proud member of a committee overseeing the World Bank, United Nations and other global institutions. Congrats.

By this count, 16 countries make the cut. First up, alphabetically, is Bangladesh. Brazil and Canada are next, with the list reaching the United Kingdom and the United States. (You didn't think Obama would be off the invite list, did you?)

In a paper published by the Center for Global Development, Ramachandran and Rueda-Sabater compare their tally to the Group of 20, which will gather for its second financial summit next month in London. Mexico, Saudi Arabia and South Korea—all G20 members and U.S. allies—don't make the list. Newbies such as Nigeria and Pakistan do.

Why 2 percent? "You want to have all the key players there,

but you also want to have a manageable number" of countries, said Ramachandran. The 2 percent threshold yields 72 percent of the planet's economy and 65 percent of its population. "That's a big chunk of the world brought to the table," she said.

In fact, they would give the rest of the world a voice by adding five rotating spots on the committee, and would recalculate the standings every few years in case anyone should be added or dropped.

So, would the world's powers ever agree to this? "That's the million-dollar question," admits Ramachandran. Still, this is a novel proposal to make global leadership more representative—even if its chances may be about 2 percent.

LET

From Page 6

ritorial island industries would "cause serious dislocation in some insular industries and curtail employment opportunities."

For this reason, beginning in 1956, and in accordance with Sections 5, 6, and 8 of the Fair Labor Standards Act (29 U.S.C. Sections 205, 206, 208), the Wage and Hour Division of the U.S. Department of Labor conducted Special Industry Committees every two years in American Samoa to determine minimum wage increases. While these Industry Committees were phased out in other U.S. Territories due to their more diversified economies, to this day American Samoa is still a single-industry economy and this is why Special Industry Committees continued in American Samoa until enactment of P.L. 110-28 in 2007.

While we agree that there were problems associated with the Special Industry process, reforming the process makes more sense than automatically increasing rates as now mandated by federal law. As any report will show, the economies of American Samoa and CNMI are very different than the economies of the States. For example, more than 80 percent of American Samoa's private sector economy hinges on two tuna canneries, StarKist and Chicken of the Sea, which employ more than 74 percent of the local workforce. As has been stated before, a decrease in production or departure of one or both of these canneries will devastate the local economy causing widespread lay-offs and insurmountable financial difficulties.

Because of American Samoa's dependency on these two canneries, American Samoa is concerned about the unintended consequences of P.L. 110-28. Since enactment of P.L. 110-28, StarKist Samoa, which was previously owned by Del Monte, was sold to Dongwon Industries, a South Korean conglomerate which, in response to automatic federal increases in minimum wage, recently announced that it will introduce cost-saving measures in American Samoa by eliminating twenty full-time salaried positions; hourly employee pension benefits; seven paid holidays; paid vacation for hourly employees; and additional activities that benefit hourly workers currently employed at StarKist Samoa. A copy of StarKist's announcement is attached.

Chicken of the Sea/Samoa Packing has followed suit, announcing on February 13, 2009 that effective March 31, 2009, it will freeze the retirement plan for its employees; vacation pay for hourly production workers will stop effective February 28, 2009; and there will be no more paid holidays for the hourly workers effective February 28, 2009. A copy of this announcement is also included for your information. It is also rumored that Chicken of the Sea is looking to relocate to Thailand, home of its parent company, Thai Union.

Whether or not StarKist and Chicken of the Sea would have made these announcements even if minimum wage had not been increased, we do not know. But, we recognize that American Samoa's canneries are faced with global problems that are beyond their control, including low wage rates in competitive countries, and rising energy costs due to the remote location of American Samoa. With wage rates for fish cleaners at \$0.70 cents and less per hour in competing countries, it is difficult for American Samoa's canneries to remain competitive with escalating federal minimum wage rates that are currently at about \$4.25 per hour.

Also, American Samoa's distance from the mainland compounds rising energy costs which impact the local canneries. As you may know, American Samoa lies 2,300 miles southwest of Hawaii, covers a land area of 76 square miles, and has a per capita income of about \$4,300 per year. Economic growth and development in American Samoa is limited due to scarcity of land, labor and capital. This is why the need for us to save American Samoa's only private sector industry is a must, despite whatever troubles the tuna industry may have brought on itself.

It is also imperative that we help CNMI. CNMI is reeling from a devastating loss of 35 percent of its revenue over the last two years, as the garment industry has rapidly shut down due to a lack of competitiveness with foreign countries where labor is

cheap and abundant. As of the end of January, the CNMI will no longer have any operating garment factories. Out of 34 factories, only seven remained open after the first minimum wage increase, and now all are closed. So, the impact of the scheduled third minimum wage increase will have the greatest effect on the one remaining industry, tourism.

Tourism has been seriously curtailed by Asia's worsening economic conditions and CNMI suffers from a lack of air service from Japan following the 2005 pull out of Japan Airlines due to its own financial instability amid rising costs of fuel. As a result, tourism is in about a 25-percent decline, and the effect of a third increase in the minimum wage this year will further exacerbate the financial strain on the Commonwealth.

Notwithstanding these problems, CNMI is committed to building a sustainable economy based on tourism and other economic initiatives, and has indicated its support for future increases in the minimum wage as warranted by existing economic conditions. At the same time, costs of power in the CNMI have increased over 100 percent, a scenario that has caused the exodus of many citizens and businesses. As a result of these serious trends and an estimated loss of as many as 25,000 people from its population, the CNMI government now faces the need for a rapid downsizing in the com-

cial Industry Committees in American Samoa, and to bring CNMI under this umbrella, so that, under the direction of a new and long-awaited Administration, it would be up to the U.S. Department of Labor, not Congress, to determine future minimum wage increases, given the unique status of our territories.

Historically, as already noted, since 1956, minimum wage rates for American Samoa were always determined by Special Industry Committees administered by the U.S. Department of Labor. And, it was the House Resources Committee and the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources that had primary jurisdiction for all matters pertaining to the Territories, including minimum wage. Only in 2007 was there an historical shift in which the House Committee on Education and Labor, and the Senate HELP Committee, became involved in how minimum wage should be administered in American Samoa and CNMI.

Also, by way of information, American Samoa was not included in the original minimum wage bill put forward by Chairman George Miller. In fact, it was not a Democratic initiative but Republican politics that led to American Samoa's inclusion in P.L. 110-28. During the markup of the bill, a Republican offered an amendment to apply federal minimum wage standards to American Samoa as a way to embarrass Speaker Pelosi. Republicans went so far as to perpetuate a false story that suggested Speaker Pelosi was exempting American Samoa from minimum wage increases because she was accepting campaign contributions from StarKist's then parent company, Del Monte, which was one of her hometown companies. To give their story legs, House Republicans wore stickers on the House floor emblazoned with the StarKist logo and the words, "Something's Fishy." The *Washington Times* and other media outlets carried the story. Copies of some of these stories are included for your review.

As you can appreciate, as a result of these distortions, Democrats were left with little choice but to acquiesce to Republican demands to include American Samoa in the minimum wage bill, although the Speaker never at any time accepted campaign contributions from Del Monte and although American Samoa was in full compliance with federal law which established Special Industry Committees to determine wage rates in the territory due to its unique status.

Contrary to the ignorance that was perpetuated during these debates, American Samoa and CNMI, as well as the other U.S. territories, continue to have different relationships with the federal government, than do States. CNMI is under a "covenant" relationship with the U.S., and American Samoa is an "unincorporated" and "unorganized" territory. Given our unique status, which entitles us to be treated differently, we have made a good-faith effort to support the intent of P.L. 110-28, even though the reasons American Samoa was included in the bill remain in question.

Having done our best to support the law's intent, neither American Samoa nor CNMI is able to move forward with further increases in minimum wage until data can be collected which will determine one way or the other whether or not our economies can sustain further increases. To move forward with further increases without sufficient data to justify this course of action would be to play Russian roulette with the lives of our people, and we are confident that this is not what Congress intended when it passed legislation to increase minimum wage rates in American Samoa and CNMI.

Now faced with a global financial crisis and the near collapse of the American economy, I am asking for immediate relief and the re-establishment of a modified version of Special Industry Committees which would empower the U.S. Secretary of Labor to make further determinations about future increases in American Samoa and CNMI until such time as Congress can gather the information it needs to make an informed decision.

Without the Administration's support, American Samoa and CNMI could become welfare wardens of the federal government. But, because our people want and deserve better, I am hopeful that the Administration will stand with us by supporting the inclusion of language in the FY2009 Omnibus Appropriations bill which is respectful of the intent of P.L. 110-28 but which also protects our local economies.

While we agree that there were problems associated with the Special Industry process, reforming the process makes more sense than automatically increasing rates as now mandated by federal law.

ing months. However, there may not be jobs waiting in the private sector with the minimum wage increase and rising costs of doing business. A copy of an economic forecast and report prepared for CNMI by McPhee and Associates is included for your review.






Given the seriousness of both situations, we are hopeful that the Administration will support efforts to put in place a modified version of Special Industry Committees which will empower the U.S. Secretary of Labor to determine future increases until more data can be collected, especially since workers in American Samoa and CNMI have finally received a long overdue increase of \$1 per hour since enactment of P.L. 110-28. But, given the uncertainty as to whether or not the second increase is sustainable over time, we are convinced that further increases in minimum wage must proceed cautiously and be preceded by further study. Also, recognizing that the next scheduled increase due in July 2009 is only five months away, we are compelled to find alternatives to help save American Samoa's economy from collapse. Because the potential hardships are simply too great to our local communities, we hope that the Administration and Congress will work quickly to help our local governments build a safety net.

We believe this can best be accomplished by adding language to the FY2009 Omnibus bill to reestablish a modified form of Spe-

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

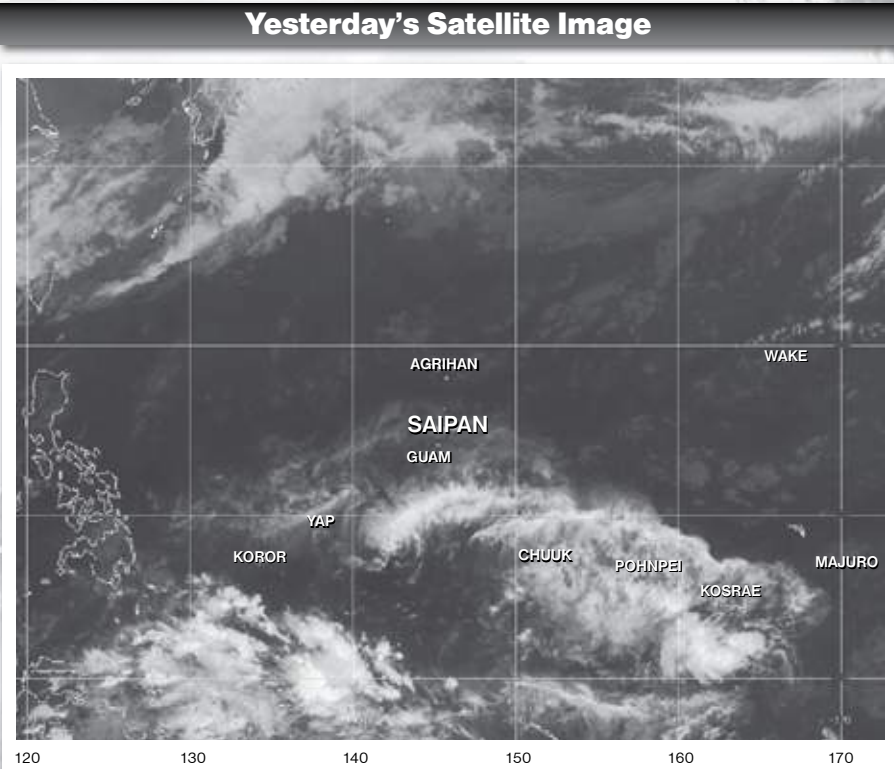
5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
				
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲86° ▼77°	▲86° ▼77°	▲86° ▼77°	▲86° ▼77°	▲86° ▼77°

Micronesia		
Guam and Rota	Showers	▲84 ▼75
Palau	Showers	▲88 ▼78
Yap	Partly Sunny	▲87 ▼77
Chuuk	Showers	▲88 ▼79
Pohnpei	Cloudy	▲86 ▼74
Kosrae	Partly Sunny	▲90 ▼76
Majuro	Sunny	▲85 ▼75

Around The Globe		
Auckland	Showers	▲72 ▼61
Beijing	Cloudy	▲50 ▼37
Hong Kong	Thunderstorms	▲64 ▼59
Honolulu	Showers	▲74 ▼67
London	Cloudy	▲52 ▼43
Los Angeles	Cloudy	▲64 ▼48
Manila	Thundershowers	▲91 ▼75
Melbourne	Mostly Cloudy	▲69 ▼52
Miami	Mostly Sunny	▲80 ▼66
New York	Cloudy	▲60 ▼47
Osaka	Cloudy	▲47 ▼36
Paris	Showers	▲50 ▼43
Pusan	Mostly Cloudy	▲52 ▼36
Rome	Mostly Sunny	▲58 ▼39
Salem	Showers	▲47 ▼35
San Francisco	Partly Sunny	▲59 ▼45
Seoul	Partly Sunny	▲49 ▼28
Tokyo	Cloudy	▲54 ▼38
Washington, DC	Partly Sunny	▲68 ▼49

Tides		
Saipan Harbor		
5:52 AM Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
10:46 AM Today	Low Tide:	1.4 Feet
3:31 PM Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
11:15 PM Today	Low Tide:	0.3 Feet



PICTURE TIME: 1:00AM, FRIDAY, MARCH 6, 2009
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A surface trough extends from EQ153E to 5N154E. Low-level winds converging east of the trough are triggering numerous showers and isolated thunderstorms south of Pohnpei and Kosrae between the equator and 5N from 156E to 162E. Scattered trade-wind showers and isolated thunderstorms are found between the equator and 3N from 138E to 141E.

Sunrise/Sunset			Moonrise/Moonset		
Today	6:31 AM	6:26 PM	Today	2:35 PM	3:04 AM
Sunday	6:30 AM	6:26 PM	Sunday	3:42 PM	3:57 AM
Monday	6:29 AM	6:26 PM	Monday	4:42 PM	4:46 AM
Tuesday	6:29 AM	6:26 PM	Tuesday	5:39 PM	5:30 AM
Wednesday	6:28 AM	6:27 PM	Wednesday	6:35 PM	6:11 AM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

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 - ISLAND SNAPSHOTS Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
 - BIRTHDAY GREETINGS A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
 - BUSINESS Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
 - SAMUT SARI Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
 - TRAVELOGUE Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.
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 - COMMUNITY BRIEFS

- Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
 - Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
 - Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
 - Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
 - For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.
- For announcements:**
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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 1, 2009

DEPARTURES	ARRIVALS
Saipan-Rota CO9597 11:50am 12:25pm 1,7	Rota-Saipan CO 9598 3:25am 4:00am 5,6
Saipan-Guam CO9317 5:00am 5:50am Daily CO9313 8:30am 9:20am Daily CO9597 11:50am 1:20pm 1,7 via Rota CO9601 12:30pm 1:20pm 2,3,4,5,6 CO9603 3:30pm 4:20pm Daily CO9605 6:30pm 7:20pm Daily CO9599 9:30pm 10:20pm Daily	Guam-Saipan CO 9316 2:30am 3:20am 1,2,3,4,7 CO9598 2:30am 4:00am 5,6 via Rota CO9596 7:00am 7:50am Daily CO9600 10:20am 11:10am Daily CO9602 2:00pm 2:50pm Daily CO9604 5:00pm 5:50pm Daily CO9606 8:00pm 8:50pm Daily
Saipan-Narita NW 099 5:00am 7:35am Daily NW 078 8:20am 1:30pm 2,3,4,5,6,7 NW 075 4:55pm 7:30pm Daily	Narita-Saipan NW 076 10:15am 2:40pm Daily NW 077 6:25pm 1:20am+1 2,3,4,5,6,7 NW 100 8:45pm 1:10am+1 Daily
Guam-Narita NW 73 4:10pm 7:00pm Daily NW 81 3:55pm 6:55pm Daily	Narita-Guam NW 74 9:45am 2:20pm Daily NW 82 10:30am 3:10pm Daily
Saipan-Osaka OZ 119 4:00am 6:40am 1,4,6 NW 083 4:30pm 7:20pm Daily	Osaka-Saipan OZ 120 9:50pm 2:20am+1 3,5,7 NW 084 10:40am 3:05pm Daily
Guam-Osaka NW 79 4:45pm 7:35pm Daily	Osaka-Guam NW 80 10:30am 3:00pm Daily
Saipan-Nagoya NW 078 8:20am 11:05am Daily	Nagoya-Saipan NW 077 9:00pm 1:20am+1 Daily
Guam-Nagoya NW 23 4:30pm 7:20pm Daily	Nagoya-Guam NW 24 10:00am 2:30pm Daily
Saipan-Incheon OZ 604 2:10am 6:00am 1 OZ 604 2:40am 6:30am 2,3,4,5,6,7 OZ 119 4:00am 11:25am 1,4,6 via Osaka OZ 606 3:20pm 7:00pm Daily	Incheon-Saipan OZ 605 9:00am 2:20pm Daily OZ 603 7:40pm 1:00am+1 7 OZ 120 7:10pm 2:20am+1 3,5,7 via Osaka OZ 603 8:10pm 1:30am+1 1,2,3,4,5,6
Saipan-Busan OZ 608 3:20am 6:50am 1,4,5,7	Busan-Saipan OZ 607 9:00pm 2:10am+1 3,4,6,7
Saipan-Shanghai FM 844 2:50am 5:40am 2,6	Shanghai-Saipan FM 843 7:15pm 1:50am+1 1,5
Rota-Guam CO 9597 12:50pm 1:20pm 1,7	Guam-Rota CO 9598 2:30am 3:00am 5,6
Guam-Palau CO 953 7:40pm 8:40pm 1,7 CO 893 5:50pm 6:50pm 3,5	Palau-Guam CO 954 2:30am 5:25am 1,2 CO 892 2:35am 5:30am 4,6
Palau-Manila CO 893 7:35pm 9:10pm 3,5	Manila-Palau CO 892 10:10pm 1:50am+1 3,5
Guam-Manila CO 893 5:50pm 9:10pm 3,5 via Koror CO 933 8:00pm 9:40pm Daily PR 111 6:00am 7:50am 1,2,4,6,7	Manila-Guam CO 892 10:10pm 5:30am+1 3,5 via Koror CO 934 11:10pm 4:40am+1 Daily PR 110 10:10pm 4:00am+1 1,3,5,6,7
Nagoya-Manila NW 71 8:40pm 11:55pm Daily	Manila-Nagoya NW 72 6:30am 11:05am Daily
Incheon-Hongkong OZ 721 9:20am 12:00pm Daily OZ 723 7:45pm 10:35pm Daily OZ 7173 8:00pm 10:50pm 5,7	Hongkong-Incheon OZ 724 12:30am 4:50am Daily OZ 7183 12:45am 5:05am 1,4,6 OZ 722 1:30pm 5:45pm Daily
Narita-Manila NW 1 7:00pm 10:55pm Daily	Manila-Narita NW 2 7:45am 12:40pm Daily

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency	Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota				FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 100 7:00am 7:30am Daily				FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan				FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 100 7:50am 8:20am Daily				FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota				FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 200 9:00am 9:30am Daily				FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
Rota-Guam				FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
FRE 200 9:50am 10:15am Daily				Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
Guam-Rota				FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 300 4:00pm 4:30pm Daily				FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
Rota-Saipan				FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 300 4:50pm 5:25pm Daily				FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
Saipan-Rota				FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 400 6:00pm 6:30pm Daily				FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
Rota-Guam				FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 400 6:45pm 7:15pm Daily				FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian				FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 101 6:45am 6:55am Daily				FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 103 7:30am 7:40am Daily				FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 105 8:00am 8:10am Daily				FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 107 8:40am 8:50am Daily				FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily
FRE 109* 9:10am 9:20am Daily							
FRE 111* 10:45am 10:55am Daily							



NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Schedule of Religious Services														
CATHOLIC														
Mt. Carmel Cathedral Sunday Mass: 6am, 9am, 11am and 6pm Monday-Saturday: 6am Wednesday: 6am and 6pm														
Korean Center Sunday: 10:30am Wednesday: 10am Thursday-Friday: 8pm Saturday: 3pm and 7:30pm														
Kristo Rai Parish Sunday Mass: 6am, 8am and 9:30am Monday- Saturday: 6am Wednesday: 6am and 6pm Saturday: 6am and 6pm														
Nuestra Senora De Soledad Parish Wednesday Mass: 6pm First Friday Healing Mass: 6pm Saturday Mass: 6pm Sunday Masses: 7:30am & 9am														
Saint Jude Parish Sunday: 6am, 8am, 10am Wednesday and Thursday: 6pm														
San Antonio Parish Sunday: 6am and 8am Tuesday and Friday: 6pm														
San Francisco de Borja-Rota Sunday: 6am and 8am Monday-Saturday: 6am Wednesday: 6pm														
San Isidro-Rota Sunday: 5am and 10am Monday-Wednesday: 7pm Thursday-Saturday: 5am and 7pm														
San Jose (Oleai) Parish Sunday: 6am and 7:30am Tuesday-Wednesday and Friday-Saturday: 6pm														
San Roque Parish Sunday: 9am Wednesday: 6pm Saturday: 10:30am														
San Vicente Parish Sunday: 6am, 9am and 6pm Monday-Saturday: 6pm														
Santa Remedios Sunday: 7:30am Tuesday: 6pm Saturday: 10am-Baptism														
Santa Soledad Sunday: 7:30am														
PROTESTANT														
Born Again Christian (Upper Room Int'l Ministries), Saipan Wednesday Prayer and Healing Night: 8-10:30pm Saturday Tagalog Service: 8-10:30pm Sunday English Service: 9:30-11am Sunday School for Children: 10-11am Sunday Filipino Service: 7-9pm														
Calvary Baptist Church, Saipan Sunday School: 9am Sunday Morning Worship: 10am Sunday Evening Worship: 6pm Wednesday Prayer Service: 7pm														
Chinese Christian Church of Saipan Worship Services: Sunday, 10am and 7:30pm Bible Study: Tuesday-Friday, 9:25pm														
Cornerstone Christian Church, Saipan Worship/Study Opportunities Adult Sunday School: 9am Youth Sunday School: 9am English Worship Service Sunday: 10am Sunday Service: 5:30pm Worship/Fellowship Sunday: 9:30pm Evangelism/Follow-up: Sunday/Monday: 1:30/7:30pm Worship Team: Monday/Saturday-9pm; Cell Groups Tuesday: 7:30pm Mid-week Service: 7:30pm Prayer Meeting Wednesday: 7:30pm Leader's Bible Study Friday: 7:30 pm Cornerstone School of Ministry Saturday: 7:30pm														
Episcopal/Anglican Church on Saipan St. Paul's Episcopal Church Worship Service Sunday: Holy Communion 9:00am Place: Vicarage, Chalan Lulau, Call 235-0545 for directions														
Grace Christian Assembly, Saipan Worship Service: 9am GBI Classes: 4-6pm Prayer Meeting: Monday-Saturday: 6am Sunday: 7am Home Cell Bible Study: Wednesday-Friday: 7pm Youth Service: Friday: 5:30pm														
Iglesia Ni Cristo, Saipan Wednesday: 7:45pm (Tagalog) Thursday: 5:30am (English); 7:45 pm (English) Saturday: 7:45pm (Tagalog) Sunday: 6:45am (English) Children Worship Service: Sunday, 9am (English)														
Immanuel United Methodist Church Koblerville Sunday Services 9:00 AM Place of the church-next to Mt. Carmel Cathedral on Chalan Kanoa Dr. • Tel: 322-6158 Pastor JJ Matsumoto														
Immanuel Methodist Church (Filipino Congregation) Sunday: 7:00am-Choir Rehearsal 8:00am-Church Service (Tagalog)														
9:15am-Sunday School Wednesday: 6:30pm, home group 8:00pm-Prayer Meeting Thursday: 7:30pm-Choir Practice (Church) Saturday: 8:00pm-Choir Practice (Parsonage)														
Jesus is Lord Church, Saipan English Service: 9-11am, Sunday Tagalog Service: 6-8pm, Sunday														
Korean Presbyterian Church, Saipan Sunday School: 8:20am Sunday Adult: 10am Sunday Adult: 11:30am Sunday Evening: 7:30pm Wednesday: 8pm														
Life in the Son Christian Fellowship, Saipan Sunday Worship Service: 10am-12noon Tuesday: Leadership Institute 7pm-10pm Wednesday: Corporate prayer 7pm-8pm Last Friday of the month-prayer: 7pm-11pm Friday: Youth on Fire: 7pm-9pm Tel. No. 235-LIFE (5433)														
Marianas Baptist Church, Saipan English Worship Service: 9-10:30am Evening Worship Service: 6-7pm Children Sunday School: 9-10:30am Tagalog Sunday School: 11am-12pm English Sunday School: 11am-12pm Korean Worship Service: 11am-12pm Wednesday Prayer Meeting: English, 7pm-8pm Korean: 8:30pm-9:30pm														
Missions Connection Ministry Every Sunday Celebrations: 10am (English), 6pm (Tagalog) Wednesday Bible Study: 7pm Youth Impact Friday: 7pm Saturday Prayer Meeting: 7pm														
Northern Marianas Christian Church Sunday Worship Service 10am Fina Sisu Housing FS#1 (Child care will be provided) Friday Services @ 7pm Fina Sisu FS#1 for more info pls. contact Ryan 484-2620														
Saipan Bible Fellowship Church Sunday School: 9:30-10am Divine Worship: 10am-11:30am Evening Service: 7pm-8:30pm Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 8pm-9pm														
Saipan Christian Church Sunday: 7:30am-10am Sunday: 6:30 pm -9pm Monday: 8 pm -10pm (Prayer Meeting) Thursday: 8pm-10pm (Cell Groups)														
Saipan Church of Christ Sunday Bible Class: 9am Sunday Worship: 10am Sunday Worship English: 6pm Sunday Worship Tagalog: 7pm Wednesday Bible Study: 7:30pm														
Saipan Community Church (Sunday Services) Palau Service: 7:30am-9am English Service: 10am-11:30am Chuukese Service: 1pm-2:30pm Filipino Service: 5:00pm-7:00pm														
Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Saipan (Saturday Church Services) Sabbath School Program: 9-10am Lesson Study: 10-10:40am Divine Service: 11-12pm Visitation: 3-4pm Adventist Youth Program: 4:30-5:30pm Sundown Worship: 6-7pm														
First Baptist Church (Formerly Saipan Baptist Church) Afetna St., San Antonio Sunday <table><tr><td></td><td>9am</td><td>Sunday school</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>10am</td><td>Regular worship</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>6pm</td><td>worship</td></tr><tr><td>Wednesday</td><td>7pm</td><td>worship</td></tr></table> Everyone is warmly welcome to attend our worship services. Transportation is readily available to anyone who needs a ride to our church. For further information, please call Pastor David M. Mclure at 234-1939/235-7779.				9am	Sunday school		10am	Regular worship		6pm	worship	Wednesday	7pm	worship
	9am	Sunday school												
	10am	Regular worship												
	6pm	worship												
Wednesday	7pm	worship												
Thy Word Ministries Saipan Faith Center Phone 234-0209 New Christian Charismatic Church Service located in Chalan Paio, Beach Road in the Sablan building on the 2nd floor above Subway Sandwiches. Senior Pastors: George & Gail Kamakahi Asst. Pastors: Eric & Penny Sakaguchi Service Times Sunday 10:00am Worship Service Sunday 7pm Discipleship Classes Tuesday 10:00am Bible Studies Tuesday 6:00pm Intercessory Prayer Tuesday 7:00pm Music Practice Wednesday 7:00pm Mid-Week Service Saturday 10:00am Evangelism														
Upper Room International Ministries Sunday 5:30 am-6:30 am Morning prayer <table><tr><td>7am-9am</td><td>English service</td></tr><tr><td>7am-9am</td><td>Sunday school</td></tr><tr><td>10am-12noon</td><td>English service,</td></tr></table> Koblerville Wednesday 7pm-9pm Prayer meeting Saturday 7pm-9pm Tagalog service Venue: Jason Presbyterian Church Gualo Rai, Saipan			7am-9am	English service	7am-9am	Sunday school	10am-12noon	English service,						
7am-9am	English service													
7am-9am	Sunday school													
10am-12noon	English service,													
Victory Chapel Christian Fellowship Church Sunday School: 9:30am Sunday AM Worship:10:30am Sunday PM Worship:7:00am Wed Worship: 7:30pm Prayer 45 min. Prior to Service Times Morning Prayer: 6-8am M-S														

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

MARCH 7, 2000

Sexual abuse case vs lawyer a retaliation?
Questioning the motive of the Attorney General’s Office for filing a sexual abuse case against a prominent lawyer, Rep. Stanley T. Torres yesterday sought intervention by the Federal Bureau of Investigation to look into the matter in light of the two-year gap from the alleged incident. He said the move by government prosecutors is “extremely suspicious,” especially coming on the heels of attorney Joseph A. Arriola’s victory in a lawsuit that forced former acting Attorney General Maya B. Kara out of office. “This case smacks of retaliation for his successes against the AG’s office,” Mr. Torres said during a privilege speech at yesterday’s session of the House of Representatives.

Financial institutions may halt lending until economy improves
Slow business activities, which virtually cripple the borrowers’ ability to pay back, forced banking institutions in the Northern Marianas to carry out a more cautious approach in credit applications, resulting to a sharp decline in approved loans last year. This, even as finance experts claim that banks continue to expand their lending base, notwithstanding higher risks of delinquency due to lower returns of income in times of economic difficulties. Government records disclosed loans approved by private banks in the CNMI fell by \$12 million to \$288 million during the fourth quarter of last year from the previous period’s \$300 million. Banking officials said commercial banks have adopted a more cautious, conservative approach in processing loan applications due to the worsening economic conditions in the islands.

MARCH 7, 2001

Mandarin Air suspends Saipan flights
Mandarin Airlines will cancel its flights to the Northern Marianas due to revenue losses incurred since November 2000 after the termination of charter agreement with Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino. Mandarin Air Saipan Station Manager Charlie Ling said Saipan-Taipei flights will be suspended beginning March 24 until June this year to prevent more losses, projected to reach \$20,000 per round-trip. Mandarin Air decided to suspend operations between Saipan and Taipei despite the recent signing of an agreement with Mobil Oil Marianas, granting a 10-cent reduction on aviation fuel for the carrier beginning May. The suspension also came amid pledges made by the CNMI government in terms of releasing about \$100,000 in additional funds to finance tourism promotion in Taiwan.

Guidelines for military exercise in FDM eyed
The Senate is seriously looking at setting the guidelines for the US Military’s bombing exercises in Farallon de Medinilla, in fresh attempts to save the island north of Saipan from further destruction. Senate Floor Leader Pete P. Reyes disclosed plans to craft a resolution that would list down the kind of military activities that may be allowed in Farallon de Medinilla. While acknowledging that the CNMI allowed the island’s use for military exercise when it signed the Covenant with the US, Mr. Reyes said local leaders were not aware then of the environmental destruction that comes with the bombing.

MARCH 7, 2002

Tighter belt for government
Acting Gov. Diego T. Benavente will ask the Office of Management and Budget to implement a proportionate reduction on third and fourth quarter allotments in light of dwindling government revenues. Benavente said that, aside from the Public School System, all other government agencies and offices will receive lower quarterly allotments to prevent deeper depletion of public coffers. He said the PSS will be exempted from the proportionate reduction of allotments so as not to disrupt educational programs and services. “Education is the single most important component in our overall plans to reach the goals of our common future. For our businesses, that means having an educated, skilled workforce to meet your needs.”

Business

Workers clobbered by relentless layoffs

WASHINGTON (AP)—Cost-cutting employers are resorting to even bigger layoffs as they scramble to survive the recession, feeding insecurities among those who still have jobs and those who desperately want them.

The Labor Department on Friday is slated to release a report expected to show that February was an especially cruel month for America’s workers.

Employers likely slashed a net total of 648,000 jobs last month, according to economists’ forecasts. If they are right, it would mark the worst month of job losses since the recession started in December 2007. It also would represent the single biggest month of job reductions since October 1949, when the country was just pulling out of a painful recession, although the labor force has grown significantly since then.

“The pace of layoffs is fast and furious,” said Stuart Hoffman, chief economist at PNC Financial Services Group. “We’re still in the teeth of this recession and the bite has not let up at all.”

With employers slashing payrolls, the nation’s unemployment rate is expected to jump to 7.9 percent, from 7.6 percent in January. If that happens, it would mark the highest jobless rate since reaching 8 percent in January 1984, a time when the unemployment rate was still slowly moving down after having topped 10 percent during the early 1980s recession.

Employers are shrinking their work forces at alarming clip and are turning to other ways to slash costs—including trimming workers’ hours, freezing wages or cutting pay—because the recession has eaten into their sales and profits. Customers at home and abroad are cutting back as other countries cope with their own economic problems.

A new wave of layoffs hit this week.

General Dynamics Corp. said Thursday it will lay off 1,200 workers due partly to plummeting sales of business and personal jets that forced it to cut production. Defense contractor Northrop Grumman Corp., and Tyco Electronics Ltd., which makes electronic components, undersea telecommunications systems and wireless equipment, also are trimming payrolls.

“This is basically cleaning house for a lot of firms,” said John Silvia, chief economist at Wachovia. “They are using the first quarter to cut back employment and figure out what they want.”

Disappearing jobs and evaporating wealth from tanking home values, 401(k)s and other investments have forced consumers to retrench, driving companies to lay off workers. It’s a vicious cycle in which all the economy’s negative problems feed on each other, worsening the downward spiral.

“The economy is in a tailspin. Businesses are jettisoning jobs at an unprecedented pace,” said Richard Yamarone, economist at Argus Research.

Some 3.6 million jobs have disappeared so far in a deepening recession, which is shaping up as the biggest job killer in the post-World War II period.

The country is getting bloodied by fallout from the housing, credit and financial crises—the worst since the 1930s. And there’s no easy fix for a quick turnaround, economists said.

GM’s auditors raise the specter of Chapter 11

DETROIT (AP)—Of all the words in General Motors Corp.’s 402-page annual report, none is more jarring than two written by the company’s auditors: “substantial doubt.”

The doubt, according to Deloitte & Touche LLC, is about whether GM can overcome its staggering losses and generate enough cash to stay in business, or remain a “going concern” as accountants would say.

GM concedes in the report filed Thursday that it’s on the edge of bankruptcy and won’t be able to avoid it unless it gets more government money and successfully executes a huge restructuring plan.

It’s no surprise that auditors would question GM’s viability.

Nation

Obama: Every voice must be heard on health reform

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Barack Obama pumped health care allies and skeptics alike for ways to overhaul the nation's costly and frustrating system Thursday and heard only applause and agreement when he told them there's "a clear consensus that the need for health care reform is here and now."

However, he conceded at a White House summit that opinions vary widely on exactly what to do and said that winning quick approval for historic and stunningly expensive legislation won't be easy.

Still, the unanimity on the urgency to act underscored how the political environment has become more favorable to revamping the thorny system since President Bill Clinton's attempt failed in the 1990s under intense resistance from drug makers, insurance companies and others. All those interest groups were on hand Thursday, and Obama intended his daylong Washington session and a series of meetings to follow around the country to signal that his push for universal health care coverage will be more open and inclusive than Clinton's.

"Every voice has to be heard. Every idea must be considered ... The status quo is the one option that is not on the table," Obama said during the White House forum on what he calls the



President Barack Obama speaks about healthcare reform in the East Room of the White House in Washington Thursday, March 5, 2009.

greatest threat to the U.S. economy—rising health care costs. Mindful of the demise of the Clinton plan, Obama warned, "Those who seek to block any reform at all, any reform at any cost, will not prevail this time around."

The U.S. system is the world's costliest; the country spends some \$2.4 trillion a year on health care. It leaves an estimated 48 million people uninsured, and many others lack adequate insurance.

Firm in his insistence on action, Obama was relaxed as he fielded questions from lawmakers and the heads of crucial interest groups. At one point he sneezed twice, and then as the audience laughed said, "This is a health care forum, so I thought I'd model what happens when you don't get enough sleep."

In an emotional moment, Sen. Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts addressed the group, his first Washington appearance in weeks as he battles brain cancer. He received a long ovation and declared, "I'm looking forward to being a foot soldier in this undertaking, and this time we will not fail."

Although Obama wants coverage for all, the president suggested a willingness to compromise. That, too, was a break from Clinton's posture in the 1990s when he promised to veto any health care measure that didn't give him what he sought.

Senate Republicans force delay on spending bill

WASHINGTON (AP)—Senate Republicans, demanding the right to try to change a huge spending bill, forced Democrats on Thursday night to put off a final vote on the measure until next week. The surprise development will force Congress to pass a stopgap funding bill to avoid a partial shutdown of the government.

Republicans have blasted the \$410 billion measure as too costly. But the reason for GOP unity in advance of a key procedural vote was that Democrats had not allowed them enough op-

portunities to offer amendments.

Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., canceled the vote, saying he was one vote short of the 60 needed to close debate and free the bill for President Barack Obama's signature.

Democrats and their allies control 58 seats, though at least a handful of Democrats oppose the measure over its cost or changes in U.S. policy toward Cuba. That meant Democrats needed five or six Republican votes to advance the bill.

None of the GOP's amendments is

expected to pass, but votes on perhaps a dozen are now slated for Monday night, Reid said.

The huge, 1,132-page spending bill awards big increases to domestic programs and is stuffed with pet projects sought by lawmakers in both parties. The measure has an extraordinary reach, wrapping together nine spending bills to fund the annual operating budgets of every Cabinet department except for Defense, Homeland Security and Veterans Affairs.

Calif. Supreme Court weighs same-sex marriage ban

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—As thousands demonstrated outside, California Supreme Court justices weighed Thursday whether voters' decision to ban same-sex marriage was a denial of fundamental rights or within what one justice called the people's "very broad powers" to amend the state constitution.

Gay rights advocates are urging the court to overturn the ban, approved in November as Proposition 8, on the grounds it was put before voters improperly, or at least prematurely. Under

state law, the Legislature must approve significant constitutional changes before they can go on the ballot.

Proposition 8's sponsors, represented by Pepperdine law school dean and former Whitewater prosecutor Kenneth Starr, said it would be a miscarriage of justice for the court to overturn the results of a fair election.

The ballot initiative, which passed with 52 percent of the vote, changed the California Constitution to trump last year's 4-3 Supreme

Court decision that legalized gay marriage. The court found that denying same-sex couples the right to wed was an unconstitutional civil rights violation.

California voters first enacted a ban on gay marriage in 2000.

Minutes into the proceedings, the justices peppered lawyer Shannon Minter, arguing for same-sex couples, with tough questions over how the 14 words of Proposition 8 represent a denial of fundamental rights.

Gupta withdraws from surgeon general search

WASHINGTON (AP)—CNN medical correspondent Dr. Sanjay Gupta won't be the next surgeon general, the Obama administration confirmed Thursday.

Gupta, 39, a neurosurgeon with star appeal, was seen as President Barack Obama's first pick for the job. He would have brought instant recognition to the office of surgeon general, a post that has lacked visibility since the days of C. Everett Koop during Ronald Reagan's presidency.

An administration official said that Gupta had been under "serious consideration" but took himself out of the running because he wants to focus on his medical career and spend more time with his family.

"We know he will continue to serve and educate the public through his work with media and in the medical arena," said the official, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity

of nominations.

The official said there were no problems that would have disqualified Gupta, and it was his decision to withdraw.

Gupta said Thursday evening he decided to pull out of contention as the nation's doctor primarily out of consideration for his two young daughters and a third child on the way.

"My wife is imminent with our third child. You know, this job ... takes us away from our children for so many years at once, and I sort of came to grips with the fact that I'd probably be away at least the first several years. ... And I just didn't feel like I should do that now," Gupta told CNN's Larry King.

While the surgeon general's job doesn't involve much policymaking responsibility, it's a bully pulpit for promoting public health. Gupta could have helped Obama pitch his health care reform plan.



Gupta

ACROSS THE NATION

Dad pleads guilty in 4 kids' deaths, wants to die

MOBILE, Ala. (AP)—A man accused of tossing his four young children to their deaths from a coastal Alabama bridge unexpectedly pleaded guilty Thursday and told a state judge he wants to be put to death. Lam Luong, 38, a Vietnamese refugee, entered the plea before Circuit Judge Charles Graddick at a hearing on a change of venue motion. Luong made the plea in a letter he wrote and gave to the judge. Under Ala-

bama law, capital murder defendants must be tried before a jury even if they plead guilty. Luong's trial starts Monday. Luong, who speaks Vietnamese, communicated with Graddick through an interpreter. Court-appointed defense attorneys have opposed his desire to plead guilty, which he had expressed previously.

Contractor to remove top execs at LA rail request

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The contractor that provided the engineer involved in

last year's deadly train collision in Los Angeles says it will comply with a request to remove its two top managers. Connex Railroad made the announcement Thursday after commuter rail service Metrolink asked the company to find a new general manager and assistant general manager. Metrolink says its request was prompted by federal findings that Connex engineer Robert Sanchez had allowed unauthorized rides in Metrolink locomotive cabs and used his cell phone just before the crash. Sanchez was among

the 25 people killed when a Metrolink passenger train failed to heed a red traffic signal and collided with a Union Pacific freight train on a shared track in September.

Slain suspect jumped judge with 6-inch metal spike

STOCKTON, Calif. (AP)—Authorities are investigating how a murder suspect got a 6-inch metal spike he used to attack a California judge during his trial. The San Joaquin County Sheriff's

office released photos of the handcrafted weapon on Thursday. A Lodi police detective fatally shot 29-year-old murder suspect David Paradiso after he left the witness stand and attacked San Joaquin County Superior Court Judge Cinda Fox on Wednesday. The sheriff's office says in a statement the attack occurred while bailiffs were removing Paradiso's mother and brother from the Stockton courtroom for causing a disruption. The statement says the weapon was found in Paradiso's hand. Fox was treated for minor injuries.

Asia

SKorea urges NKorea to retract its threat

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—South Korea on Friday urged North Korea to retract its threat against South Korean passenger planes flying near its airspace, condemning it as unjustifiable and “inhumane.”

South Korea also said it is taking measures to secure the safety of its airlines. South Korea's two major airlines—Korean Air and Asiana Airlines—have already rerouted their flights to stay clear of North Korean airspace.

“The military threat against civil airplanes’ normal flights

is a violation of international norms and an inhumane act that cannot be justified under any circumstances,” Unification Ministry spokesman Kim Ho-nyeon told reporters.

The reaction came a day after the North warned it cannot guarantee security for South Korean civil airplanes flying near its airspace and accused the U.S. and South Korea of attempting to provoke a nuclear war with the upcoming joint military drills.

The North is “compelled to

declare that security cannot be guaranteed for South Korean civil airplanes flying through the territorial air of our side and its vicinity... while the military exercises are under way,” the North's Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland said Thursday in statement carried by the state-run Korean Central News Agency.

It did not say what kind of danger South Korean planes would face or whether the threat means the North would shoot down planes.

After mutiny, Bangladeshis fear another army coup

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP)—Dead bodies were found stuffed inside manholes and buried in mass graves. The killers fired into the air above piles of corpses, the remains still dressed in their camouflage army officer uniforms.

The brutality of the failed mutiny by Bangladeshi border guards last week—and what the military sees as the prime

minister's weak response—have raised fears of a coup in this fragile democracy just two months after a military-backed government handed power back to an elected one.

The Feb. 25 revolt killed at least 70 and left the military furious with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for negotiating with the mutineers instead of allowing the army to attack.

The military doesn't trust Hasina, who took office in January after her party swept elections the previous month.

“If something else happens, they might step in. Hasina really needs to stabilize the civil-military relations,” said Ataur Rahman, a political science professor at Dhaka University. “There is still time. But there will not be a second chance.”

Sri Lanka to open safe passage for civilians

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP)—The Sri Lankan government appealed Friday for tens of thousands of civilians to flee the northern war zone and said it would open two safe passages in the area for the exodus.

The civilians are trapped along with the Tamil Tiger rebels inside a shrinking strip

of land along the northeast coast. Human Rights Watch said last week that at least 2,000 civilians had been killed in recent weeks.

International officials have issued increasing appeals to the military and the rebels to halt their battle temporarily to allow the civilians to escape, but the government has refused,

saying it was on the verge of crushing the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and ending the quarter-century civil war.

Foreign Secretary Palitha Kohona said Friday that the government was calling on the trapped civilians to flee to government-controlled areas to the north and the south along a coastal road.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Opposition leader: Pakistan security has collapsed

LAHORE, Pakistan (AP)—The Sri Lankan cricket team ambush shows the security system has collapsed in Pakistan since the pro-Western government took office a year ago, a leading opposition politician charged Thursday. The fallout from Tuesday's attack is adding to political problems facing the shaky government just as Washington wants it to stay focused on the fight against al-Qaida and the Taliban. Under intense pressure to show progress in the investigation, authorities claimed to have identified the heavily armed terrorists and were questioning several people, but appeared to have made no major arrests. The gunmen escaped into the teeming city of Lahore following the ambush.

Tibetan monk stable after setting himself ablaze

BEIJING (AP)—Chinese state media has confirmed that a Tibetan Buddhist monk had set himself on fire in southwest China last week, saying the man was now hospitalized in serious condition. The report Thursday by the official Xinhua News Agency was the first confirmation of the identity and background of the 24-year-old man, identified as Tashi or Tapey, who Xinhua said had been studying at Kirti monastery in Sichuan province's Aba county. Tibetan advocacy groups had said ear-

lier that the young monk had set himself ablaze in an apparent protest of government restrictions on religion. Xinhua quoted doctors at Aba's People's Hospital as saying the monk, who was brought in last Friday, is now “out of danger” and has been transferred to a hospital in the Sichuan capital of Chengdu.

HK airline apologizes for airport tantrum video

HONG KONG (AP)—Cathay Pacific has apologized for embarrassing a customer whose anguish after missing her flight was captured on video by an airline employee and posted on the Internet. The Hong Kong airline said in a statement to The Associated Press on Thursday that the worker who filmed the video has been disciplined but that another person posted the footage on YouTube, a video-sharing Web site. The three-minute video shot on a mobile phone shows a woman wailing, throwing herself on the floor, banging on an airport counter and trying to barge through a closed boarding gate at the Hong Kong International Airport on Feb. 4 after missing a flight to San Francisco. “They have no compassion. The plane hasn't even left, and they've shut the gate. They're crazy! They're crazy!” the woman shouted. First posted on YouTube on Feb. 12, it had drawn 4.97 million views and nearly 18,000 comments as of Thursday. Some postings have added mock subtitles.

World



A machete and bullet casings sit amidst dried blood in the dining room of assassinated Guinea-Bissau President Joao Bernardo "Nino" Vieira three days after his death, in Bissau, Guinea-Bissau Thursday, March 5, 2009. AP

Guinea-Bissau collapse deepens after leader killed

BISSAU, Guinea-Bissau (AP)—The blood-soaked kitchen where Guinea-Bissau's president was brutally murdered is littered with broken glass, bullet casings and a rusted machete.

No crime scene tape cordons off the area, no police stand guard outside. No one has been arrested, and hardly anyone in this sleepy tropical capital seems to care.

The apathy surrounding the slaying of President Joao Bernardo "Nino" Vieira in his own home—as well as the bombing attack that killed his main rival hours earlier—symbolizes

just how far this drug-wracked state has fallen.

“What are we supposed to do, cry? Demand justice?” asked journalist Zique Choaib, 41. “The powerful people at the top have been fighting each other for decades. They'll keep fighting. It's really nothing new.”

Less than 24 hours after the brutal slayings Monday, market stalls were open, people were back in the streets and the city's dilapidated fleet of blue-and-white Mercedes taxis was again cruising the potholed roads, Caribbean rhythms pulsing from their radios.

The reaction was nearly identical after the last military coup in 2003: no surprise, mild speculation, then within a day, a return to normalcy so complete it seemed as if nothing had happened.

Since winning a violent struggle for independence from Portugal in 1974, this nation of 1.5 million has been on a losing streak—cursed by coups, coup attempts and war. Today it is ranked third-worst of 177 nations on the U.N. Human Development Index, which measures general well-being. One of the world's poorest countries, life expectancy is a mere 45.

A surer Assad reaches out to US to aid needy Syria

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP)—During eight years as Syria's president, Bashar Assad has grown more sure in his grip on power—ordering a crackdown on dissent, letting a personality cult bloom around him and opening up the economy after decades of isolation.

Now Assad is eager for a breakthrough in long strained relations with the United States, hoping for U.S. help in boosting a still weak economy and for American mediation in direct peace talks with Israel. President Barack Obama is sending the highest-level administration officials in four years to

Damascus to sound out Assad's seriousness about dialogue, possibly as soon as Saturday.

They will find a president far different from the one who rose to office in 2000. At the time, Assad was considered a weak successor to his late father—longtime dictator Hafez Assad.

WORLD BRIEFS

Darfur: fears of crisis if aid agencies leave

KHARTOUM, Sudan (AP)—Even before Sudan's president expelled aid groups from Darfur following an international warrant seeking his arrest, diarrhea was spreading among newcomers at one of its largest refugee camps and people waited hours in line for water. The picture at the Zamzam Camp grew even bleaker Thursday when no aid workers showed up, leaving residents to figure out how they would get life sustaining goods from sorghum seeds to running water and tents for the influx of new refugees. “We are very concerned,” said Ibrahim Safi, 34, one of 75,000 residents at the camp. “After God, we only have the organizations.” U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said Thursday that Sudan's expulsion of 13 major aid organizations will cause “irrevocable damage” to humanitarian operations in Darfur and called on the government to urgently reconsider its decision.

Palestinian driver goes on rampage in Jerusalem

JERUSALEM (AP)—A Palestinian man commandeered a construction vehicle Thursday on a major road and swung a police car into the air, smashing it against a bus before bystanders opened fire on him and police shot him dead. The incident, the third of its kind in the past year, came a day after the latest U.S. visit to push Israel's

hawkish future leaders into another try at Mideast peacemaking. The two officers inside the police car escaped with slight injuries, police said. The bus, which was parked at an intersection, was empty. Video footage from a traffic surveillance camera showed a front-end loader scoop up the car with its shovel, hurl it into the air and slam it against the bus. Police and bystanders opened fire at the driver, and the vehicle crashed to a stop against an electricity pole.

Colombia extradites cooperative warlord

BOGOTA (AP)—A Colombian warlord who has cooperated closely with prosecutors was extradited to the United States on Thursday despite human rights groups' objections that sending him away could leave hundreds of murders unsolved. Heberth Veloza, alias “HH,” has admitted to personally killing more than 100 people and has acknowledged that fighters under his command killed hundreds more. He is the 17th Colombian paramilitary boss to be extradited to the United States in less than a year to face drug-trafficking charges. Handcuffed and wearing a bulletproof vest under a dark jacket, Veloza departed for New York on a DEA Super King turboprop plane accompanied by four U.S. agents. He switched planes at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, U.S. and Colombian officials said.

Maharlika

PINOY LIFE IN THE MARIANAS

Saturday, March 7, 2009

OFWs urged to help fund education of poor students

By **HAIDEE V. EUGENIO**
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Filipinos, organizations, and businesses in the CNMI are once again urged to help fund the education of children of less fortunate former overseas Filipino workers under the Philippine government's Tuloy Aral Program for School Year 2009-2010.

"Your \$100 can go a long way in educating these children for

one year or more," said Philippine labor attaché to the CNMI Joan Lourdes Lavilla.

The amount helps cover the recipient students' expenses such as books, school supplies, materials for projects, transportation, authorized school contributions, and allowance for the whole school year.

The Tuloy-Aral Project, launched in December 2004, assists children of less fortunate former OFWs, as well as other poor and needy elemen-

tary and high school children.

Under the program, individual, group or corporate sponsors are asked to provide US\$100 support per year to a child-beneficiary to enable him/her to continue his/her elementary or high school education.

But many sponsors continue their donations to students after the first year, making sure that the student graduates in elementary or high school, or both.

Filipinos and groups in the CNMI were the top sponsors of

students under the Tuloy Aral Program during SY 2007-2008.

"The level of support of Filipinos in the CNMI is overwhelming," Lavilla told Saipan Tribune yesterday.

About 52 percent or 107 of the 206 children of less fortunate OFWs received scholarships in SY 2007-2008 under the Tuloy Aral program.

"Filipinos have altruistic and helpful heart. We understand that the economy is down, but considering that it's only \$100

which will be used for one year by the student, it will only be a small sacrifice especially for those who are here who are better off," Lavilla said.

Schools open in June in the Philippines, and Lavilla said it will be best for donors to start their donations of \$100 now.

While the Philippine government expects existing donors to continue helping their beneficiary-students, it is also encouraging new donors to participate.

The Philippine Consulate General, through the Philippine Overseas Labor Office and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, will be the one to accept donations for the Tuloy Aral Program. These donations will then be sent to the Philippines for the recipients.

Tuloy Aral is a joint project by the Department of Labor and Employment, OWWA, and the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

RP-NDF peace talks suffers setback anew

By **DELFIN MALLARI JR.**
SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

LUCENA CITY—The resumption of peace talks between the government and communist rebels suffered a setback after a Utrecht-based official of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines blamed the government for the death of a daughter of a New People's Army leader and said the talks had become untenable.

Luis Jalandoni, chairman of the NDFP peace panel, said the communist movement strongly condemned the abduction and murder of 20-year-old Rebelyn Pitao, daughter of Leoncio Pitao, leader of the NPA's Pulang Bagani Command in Southern Mindanao.

"We hold Mrs. Gloria Arroyo and Executive Secretary, Gen-

eral Eduardo Ermita responsible for this dastardly violation of Rebelyn Pitao's right to life. It is likewise a blatant violation of the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL)," Jalandoni said in a statement sent to the Philippine Daily Inquirer, parent company of INQUIRER.net.

He added: "This latest outrageous human rights violation by the Arroyo regime and its continuing violation of the peace agreements... the recent arrest and torture of NDFP consultant Eduardo Sarmiento and the continuing detention of NDFP consultants Randall Echanis, Elizabeth Principe, Angie Ipong and Glicerio Pernia, among others, render peace talks with the Arroyo regime untenable."



CHICKS FOR SALE

A street vendor shows off colored chicks for sale Thursday, March 5, 2009 in Manila, Philippines. Chicks were sprayed with different bright colors to attract customers, mostly children.

Abu Sayyaf nixes talks to free hostages

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Al-Qaida-linked militants holding three international Red Cross workers in the southern Philippines have rejected talks with a former Muslim rebel leader tapped by the government to negotiate their release.

Abu Sayyaf leader Albader Parad said in a telephone interview with ABS-CBN television late Thursday that unless the military pulls out of Jolo island jungles, where the hostages have been held for 50 days, his group would not negotiate.

The military has rejected such demands but so far troops have refrained from launching a rescue for fear of hurting the hostages—Swiss Andreas Natter, Filipino Mary Jean Lacaba and Italian Eugenio Vagni. In its latest attempt to secure their freedom, the Philippine government sent Nur Misuari, founder of the separatist Moro National Liberation Front, to Jolo, but he has not able to talk to the abductors.

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BRUCE L. MAILMAN is a member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association and has provided immigration services in the CNMI since 1989

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LABOR FRONT

Employers on the 'Barred List'

By **FERDIE PONCE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Q: Can an alien worker check with the Department of Labor which employers are on the "Barred List"?

A: Yes. The Labor's "Barred List" is available to the public. The Labor Director maintains a "Barred List" containing the names of employers who have been barred from employing alien workers in an administrative order of a hearing officer, or in an order by the Labor Secretary on appeal.

Q: How can an employer be removed from Labor's Barred List?

A: The regulations of the new labor reform law state that employers barred permanently must petition the Labor Director to be removed from the "Barred List." La-

bor will not approve employment contracts and that no entry permits will be issued to or for an employer on the "Barred List." Employers barred for a specific period of time shall be removed from the List upon the expiration of the specified time period.

Q: Does the Labor Director have the authority to suspend action on any application for an approved employment contract while the employer has a pending case before Labor's Administrative Hearing Office?

A: Yes. The regulations state that the Labor Director should give written notice to the employer of such suspension. An employer, however, can appeal the decision to suspend processing to Labor's Administrative Hearing Office and request an expedited hearing.

According to the regulations, the Labor

Director may reject an application for an off-island hire if the circumstances of the on-island labor pool indicate that there is no substantial justification of need.

The Labor Director may issue temporary holds with respect to all application for off-island hires in the event of business closings or other events that cause a temporary increase in the unemployed on-island labor pool.

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All go for automated RP elections in 2010

Landmark measure junks manual electoral system

By KRISTINE L. ALAVE, MICHAEL LIM UBAC
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

It's full speed ahead for the computerized general elections on May 10, 2010, Commission on Elections (Comelec) Chair Jose Melo said Thursday.

"We are ready. There will be full automation nationwide," Melo said at a press briefing Thursday after the Senate passed the House-approved

P11.3-billion supplemental budget for the automation of the elections on May 10, 2010.

The Senate approval of the measure at midnight Wednesday finally discarded the fraud-prone manual counting of votes in the country.

Instead of writing on ballots, voters will shade the spaces allotted for the names of candidates. The ballots will then be inserted into the optical machine readers to be placed in clustered

precincts all over the country.

Melo said the Comelec would pursue the nationwide automation of elections, despite opposition and skepticism from certain lawmakers and information technology professionals.

Although exhausted from almost seven hours of debate, main proponents Senators Edgardo Angara and Richard Gordon beamed after the presiding officer, Senate President Pro Tempore Jinggoy Estrada, banged the gavel to adopt House Bill No. 5715, which the House of Representatives passed on Monday.

Angara said the supplemental budget was a landmark measure because it buried the

electoral system introduced in the country since democratic elections started at the turn of the 20th century.

"It is the beginning of a new era of modern elections. I'm glad that my colleagues have embraced this march to modernization of the electoral process," he said.

The results for national candidates from President, Vice President and senators will be known in two days, the Comelec said.

Comelec officials told senators before the plenary vote that technically voting would be manual, but the counting and transmission of votes would be automated.

One wounded in another media attack

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—A radio broadcaster was in critical condition Friday after being shot in the Philippines, prompting a city official to order police to "shoot and kill" his assailants.

Gunmen on a motorcycle shot Nilo Labares, broadcaster for Radio Mindanao Network in southern Cagayan de Oro city, late Thursday, police said. He was undergoing treatment at a hospital for a gunshot wound to the back.

Cagayan de Oro Vice Mayor Emano Labares said he could have been targeted because of his criticism of illegal gambling.

"He has stepped on a lot of toes," he said.

Emano said he ordered police in the city of half a million people to take steps to deter

further possible attacks on journalists by adopting a "shoot-to-kill" policy against assailants.

"My policy is for them to shoot the suspects if they resist. No more allowing them to flee. Besides, this may start a killing spree against the media," he told Radio DZXL.

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's spokesman, Cerge Remonde, condemned the shooting and ordered the national police chief "to leave no stone unturned to ensure justice is done, to identify the killers."

Political killings have long been a concern in the Philippines, where about 60 journalists have been slain since 2001, including six last year, making the country one of the world's most dangerous places for reporters.

RP police consider using street gangs to fight crime

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Manila police plan to use street gangs, neighborhood toughs and fraternities to fight crime, the Philippine capital's police chief said Thursday.

National Capital Region Director Leopoldo Bataoil said the plan is part of a police community outreach program seeking to curb both violent rivalries and gang wars and to extend the eyes and ears of police in the communities.

"We are now piloting a very, very important project — to develop gangsters to become good citizens of the land," he said. "These are the neighborhood toughies, the thugs who are informal leaders of their groups but misconstrued as a menace to society."

Bataoil said officers have met leaders of street gangs and fraternities who have been involved in crime in the past but have expressed a commitment "to support peacekeeping efforts and community development."

He said they will be allowed to make arrests to stop troublemakers or when a crime is being committed in their presence and no police officers could be immediately summoned.

The gang members will be issued identification cards and only those without outstanding warrants will be recruited, Bataoil said.

He said the gangs will become "force multipliers" for the 17,000-strong police force of metropolitan Manila, one of the world's largest urban centers with a population of about 12 million.

The neighborhood watch project will be tested in suburban Makati, the country's financial center.

The recruits will be given help finding jobs and opportunities to go back to school and will undergo a "moral recovery program and spiritual development" under police supervision.

"We are now giving importance to this seemingly neglected members of our society," he said.

Body of NPA leader's daughter found

By JEFFREY M. TUPAS
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

DAVAO CITY, Philippines—The body of the daughter of a New People's Army commander was fished out of a river in Carmen town in Davao del Sur early Thursday evening, some 24 hours after she was abducted by what her family suspect to be military agents.

Kelly Delgado, secretary general for Southern Mindanao of Karapatan (Alliance for the Advancement of People's Rights), said Rebelyn Pitao, 20, was found in Purok (sub-village) 5, San Isidro, Carmen around 6:30 p.m.

Rebelyn, the daughter of NPA commander Leoncio Pitao, also known as Commander Parago, was abducted around 6:30 p.m. Wednesday while on her way home to Bago Gallera in this city.

"If they are looking for my husband, they should look for him and not include my daughter who is innocent," her mother, Evangeline, said soon after the abduction, blaming the military.

Former Bayan Muna repre-

sentative Joel Virador told the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* that the incident was clearly part of the military's strategy against the NPA and those opposed to the Arroyo government.

"Since they cannot capture the father, they resorted to abducting the daughter instead," Virador said.

But Major Randolph Cabangbang, spokesman of the military's Eastern Mindanao command based in Camp Panacan here, said there was no basis to link them to the disappearance of Pitao's daughter.

"The military does not conform to this kind of method," he said.

Cabangbang said victims of the NPA leader's atrocities could be behind the abduction.

"It is not fair for the military to be accused of abduction. Victims of Parago, mostly businessman, may have done it out of revenge," he said.

Parago is known as the rebel commander behind the abduction of then general Victor Obillo and captain Alex Montealto in the 1990s.

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By ROY LUARCA
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

If Ricky Hatton and his trainer Floyd Mayweather Sr. are to be believed, Manny Pacquiao is in for a humbling defeat when he tangles with the "British Hitman" on May 2 in Las Vegas.

"We're going to bust his (Pacquiao's) ass up," Mayweather said in a conference call with reporters

Boxers Ricky Hatton, right, of England, and IBO World Junior Welterweight Champion Manny Pacquiao of Philippines, left, pose for photographers outside the Imperial War Museum in London, Monday March 2, 2009. Hatton and Pacquiao will fight in Las Vegas, USA, on Saturday, May, 2, 2009.

on Wednesday. "Ricky has a very good chance of knocking him out. Pacquiao is fighting a man who has real strength, can keep real pressure on him, bang him to the body and the head and smother him at the same time. That's hard to deal with."

Mayweather's bravado must have rubbed on Hatton, who became a little cocky about his chances against the four-division Filipino world champion.

"To say I'm confident would be an understatement," Hatton said in the same conference call. "Training is going well. I'm feeling really sharp."

"My size, speed and footwork will shock him," Hatton added, claiming that his technical abilities have improved under Mayweather's stewardship.

The International Boxing Organization light welterweight champ, who intends to fight at a robust 154 lb, thinks he will be able to match Pacquiao move for move.

"I strongly believe I will be as fast as Manny," said Hatton. "If I'm not as fast, I'll only be behind by the narrowest of margins."

Hatton, who is unbeaten at 140 lb, also boasted he is going to showcase his newfound boxing skills.

"I'm aggressive but I'm also technical(ly proficient) as well. They're going to see the boxing side of Ricky Hatton."

Pacquiao has yet to hear of the latest boast from the enemy but the world's best pound-for-pound fighter is unlikely to react.

Back at the familiar confines of trainer Freddie Roach's Wild Card

Gym in Hollywood, Pacquiao's focus is on his preparations for the showdown, set at 140 lb.

According to Dr. Ed de la Vega of Philboxing.com, Pacquiao did two rounds of shadow boxing, three rounds with the mitts, two rounds on the speed bag, three rounds jumping rope and two rounds on the double bag during his first day Wednesday under the watchful eye of former light heavyweight and heavyweight titlist Michael Moorer, the newest addition to Wild Card's roster of trainers.

Buboy Fernandez, one of Pacquiao's trainers, said Pacquiao shook off jet lag.

The real grind will begin next week, when Pacquiao, who underwent a tiring three-day promotional tour of Manchester and London with Hatton, regains fighting form.

PERSONAL FINANCE

10 money questions couples should ask

By LYNDA C. CORPUZ
MONEYSENSE

Editor's Note: This article is from MoneySense, the Philippines' first and only personal finance magazine. Visit www.moneysense.com.ph for more.

1: Why do we fight about money?

Melvin Esteban, a registered financial consultant, explains that couples fight about money because they do not have enough of it. Toti Tanchoco, Jr., Cocolife senior vice president for finance, says, "They fight about spending it—not money per se."

Fr. Ted, Gonzales, S.J., Center for Family Ministries (CEFAM)-Ateneo De Manila University overall program coordinator says couples undergo counselling for a lot of reasons. "Money is one of the issues, but not the main issue. [The] money issue is maybe a symbol or a mirror of the quality of their relationship for it historically traces how they view money," he says.

2: How do divvy up financial duties?

Melvin points out that the wife is the default keeper of the purse, especially if the couple is starting out. "Generally, females are more budget conscious," he reasons. Toti, however, says the wife should not be handling everything. "It's incidental she's handling the finances but it should not be 'binigay sa iyo, bahala ka na (It was given to you, you deal with it),' " he says. Fr. Ted explains, "Although that is not always the case, we still have the tendency to repeat the same old patterns. But a mature couple should be together in managing their household finances."

Couple Bambi and Francois Groleaus share money responsibilities by simply doing what they're best at. For instance,

Francois attended to the particulars of their wedding venue while Bambi took care of the entourage's needs. Planning a year in advance, and targeting a P500,000 budget, she prepared the spreadsheet while he ended up filling it in. Culturally, Bambi says Filipina wives usually budget for everything while Francois says French men often take charge of investments.

3: Should we really have to tell each other about each purchase we make?

It is just fair to tell your spouse what you buy, but there is no need to detail small purchases, Melvin says. "Just make sure you tell each other if the purchase is big, like a car, a house, or an educational plan. Both of you should decide on that big purchase," Melvin says. "It is always best to be open with each other," Toti points out.

4: How do deal with our personal luho? (frivolities)

It's important that a couple sets the right priorities. Buying that new designer bag or getting yet another gadget isn't a priority. "The way we use money is how we prioritize what is important. The couple should really sit down and talk about their priorities," Fr. Ted says.

With two pre-teen children, Bernie and Coral Santos follow the adage of living within your means. "For me, if it's not yet a necessity, I won't buy it. I'll just look and look at it, but I won't buy it immediately," Bernie says. "We wait for the right timing, and if we can afford it already, we buy," Coral adds.

But that doesn't mean you should never spend on yourself. You just have to put a lid on it. An allowance system is a good way to budget and limit discretionary expenses. Toti says it is wise to set aside money not just

for basic requirements like food, utilities, and children's education, but also a little for recreation. Melvin recommends 50% of one's income go to a common fund, 30% to allowance, and 20% to savings. "As income increases, savings should also be increased. Bonuses can be used to treat yourself to your personal luho once in a while," he says.

5: Should we only have a joint account?

Thirteen years after their marriage, the Santos opened a joint account just two years ago. "Bakit kailan lang? Kasi wala kaming ganoon, 'yun lang ang dahilan (Why just now? Because we didn't have that before, that's all)," Bernie says. But apart from their joint account now, they still have their personal accounts.

Meanwhile, the Groleaus started early. "When we got married, we started to contribute to the common fund for our household needs. We still continue each of our personal accounts," Francois shares. "We put an equal amount for the common fund. When there's extra money, Francois is the first to put in additional funds," Bambi shares. Although they have personal accounts, it does not mean they are keeping secrets about where their money goes. "I still tell Francois how much I'm putting in my account," she cites.

The two couples are doing an acceptable compromise. They have a joint account for common expenses and personal accounts for individual expenses. Melvin adds that having a joint account is good because you can still have access to the family's wealth in case of your spouse's incapacity or death.

6: How do we deal with financial crises like being

victimized by a scam or piling up a huge debt?

Fr. Ted says it's always a danger when one spouse gets into a financial mess. "Like an addiction, you don't want to let it out with your spouse since there's some shame about it. Those can break up the relationship and leave deep wounds. It's truly traumatic to have creditors running after the spouse," he says.

Toti says tendencies or habits like these should be known early on. "These should be discussed before getting married so you can agree to discipline each of your spending, saving, and investing habits," he says.

Fr. Ted says the guilty spouse will have to be honest about the unmanageability of the situation and go through a genuine recovery. "Because if there's no real examination of life, and a real surrender of that behavior, it will drain the whole family of their patience, resources, and understanding," he explains.

Always remember your spouse loves you very much that he or she is willing to marry you, Melvin says. "No matter how grave the situation is, your spouse will always be your partner to help you. The more you keep it a secret, the worse it gets," he says.

Fr. Ted says, despite everything, trust that something good will still happen and be ready to make amends. "Making amends is righting the wrong. But when you love tenderly, you will know your strengths and weaknesses, and you can act justly," he says.

7: How do we handle power struggles related to money?

Couples should review their values if they keep on fighting about money, especially in the context of who has the bigger income, "because it can sometimes be a power to some, an excuse to dominate or lord it over the other person," Fr. Ted says. "But if you really look at it, a

family is just one unit regardless of who's earning more."

"The best way is to talk and there should always be a compromise for everything," Melvin says. If the wife earns more, the husband should take it as a constructive challenge, he adds. "If the wife is earning more, it should be an inspiration for the man, especially if he is insecure about it. But should he really be insecure about it? It's all about role-playing, and one should accept each other's role," Toti says.

8: Is it possible for us to live on one income?

While it is ideal for one spouse to stay at home to focus on the children and household matters, given the times, living on a single income can be difficult. The wife should only stay at home if she cannot earn more than a house help, Melvin says. "Otherwise, both should work. Of course there are other reasons to be considered, thus the saying, 'a mother's love is always priceless,'" he says.

The Santos found it necessary not just to work full-time but find extra sources of income. Whenever their workload allowed, they accepted sidelines to add to their finances. Money they saved from these sidelines automatically went to their children's accounts.

It may be difficult, but not impossible. It takes a lot of financial discipline to live within a single income, but that works easier if the working spouse is earning an adequate amount of money.

9: How should we deal with parents who are financially dependent on us?

The Santos are helping their relatives. "Tumutulong din kami. Hindi puwedeng mawala 'yun sa monthly budget naming (We help out. We need to include this in our budget)," Coral says. Fr. Ted says the questions here are: How much

do you give? And how regular? He adds that some in-laws are becoming too dependent, as in the cases of migrant workers who have the whole barangay of relatives waiting for their salaries. "Assess if there is an abuse already and what is the effect of this constant shelling out for the relatives. If unmanageable, this will drain the couple's budget," he warns.

Dealing with in-laws and relatives about money has emotional strains to it, Melvin says. He suggests if you are earning more than you are actually spending, it is but right that you support your parents and in-laws. "Remember, you and your spouse would not be where you are now if not for your parents," he says.

Toti, however, believes that couples have to meet their own needs first. "It will not help in your planning as a couple and it just tolerates the parasitical situation. But if you know you'll have to still provide for your parents, don't marry yet. Becoming independent is the idea why you're starting a family," he says.

10: How do I deal with an uncooperative spouse?

Melvin subscribes to what the best sales people believe is "your 99." "That means, 99% of the time, you're thinking of what's good for them. So you have to convince him or her on anything," he says. Fr. Ted advises to first exhaust all means, like counselling or attending marriage encounters. But if it is really unmanageable, the Church will look into the marriage's viability. "The Church wants a couple to have a relationship grounded in love. But it also tries to be objective in considering certain relationships that are out of control, especially if there were already hints of unmanageability before the marriage," he explains.

Maharlika – PinoyStyle

Piolo on KC: I've become a fan

By **BAYANI SAN DIEGO JR.**
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—Piolo Pascual has nothing but praises for KC Concepcion, his new leading lady on the forthcoming ABS-CBN series “Lovers in Paris.”

A day before this exclusive interview held at the launch of his latest endorsement (for Blue Water Day Spa), Piolo had his first taping with KC.

Tough scene

Making things tough, their first scene together involved an emotional outburst. “I had to fire her and she had to cry. But she delivered and I was impressed.”

He described KC as “refreshing” in a role that requires her to wear very little makeup. “She glows. She’s more beautiful without makeup. I’ve become a fan,” he enthused.

In a previous interview, KC related that Piolo literally “courted” her to convince her to accept the project.

“She doesn’t have to do a soap,” he explained. “It’s a big challenge ... to be seen on TV every night. I simply told her that it’ll be a good experience.”

This adventure’s highlight is a trip to Paris, where key scenes will be taped. KC finished college in Paris.

“Whenever we talk about the city, her eyes light up,” he recounted. “She’s excited to show us around and take us to her school, her favorite park and café to the Louvre.”

It will also permit them to do ordinary things like ride the Metro, the Parisian equivalent of the MRT.

As bonus, traveling will allow



Piolo Pascual has nothing but praises for KC Concepcion, his new leading lady on the forthcoming ABS-CBN series “Lovers in Paris.”

them to get closer—along with co-star Zanjoe Marudo. “There’ll be no fans and press people watching our every move. We’ll be more relaxed. We can be ourselves.”

KC said that she learns a lot from Piolo.

“What’s nice about Kristina (KC’s real name),” Piolo said, “is that she’s grounded. She will never make you feel that she’s the daughter of the Megastar (Sharon Cuneta). That she comes from

a well-off family.”

She makes him feel at ease, Piolo added. “At first, I thought I’d end up stiff or reserved around her ... but she was the first to break the ice.”

After “Lovers in Paris,” next stop for Piolo and KC is a movie.

Looks like the heartthrob is out to give KC’s erstwhile screen partner Richard Gutierrez stiff competition. As KC quipped on TV: “May the best man win.”

Dingdong wants end to Abunda-Belo row

By **DOLLY ANNE CARVAJAL**
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—Dingdong Dantes refuses to be dragged into the controversy hounding Vicki Belo and Boy Abunda, even if his name was mentioned by Vicki as a Belo endorser. The rift stemmed from Vicki’s remark, “If you want to look like Boy Abunda, go to Calayan. But if you want to look like Dingdong Dantes and Piolo Pascual, go to Belo.”

“I do not want to get in the middle of their misunderstanding,” says Dong. “I’m sure it will be resolved even without my opinion. I just want peace for everybody.”

I checked on Vicki and Boy after the issue broke out. Vicki texted back: “I’m off to the US for a conference. It will be good to be away from all this.” Boy’s text read: “This, too, will pass.” In their case, does beauty lie in the B(Belo)-holder or the C(Calayan)-holder?

Bianca’s new flame

Night owls on the prowl insist Bianca Gonzales’ new love is the owner of the trendy club Fiamma—Carlo Trillo. So reconciliation with Direk Lino Cayetano is out of the question. Bianca must be thrilled to be Trillo’s queen!

Missing scene

Careline cosmetics’ new endorser Sarah



Dingdong Dantes

Geronimo is too cute in “You Changed My Life”. Some quarters say she kinda went over the top in her acting. But I guess her role calls for it since she portrays a young and naïve woman who’s hopelessly in love with her boss, played by John Lloyd Cruz.

Sarah has her reasons why she still didn’t have a kissing scene with Loydie even if they were lovers in the movie. But sooner or later, the pop princess must pucker up lest she gets stuck in the same safe mold.

Missing in action

John Lloyd Cruz, Matet, Gio Alvarez and the cast of “You Changed My Life” were spotted having a mini-victory party

at Bugsy’s. I’m not surprised that Sarah was missing in action. Her mom watches over her like a hawk and she’s not allowed to party after work. A good girl ought to have some “good time,” too.

Cover girl

It was so heartwarming to finally meet BB Gandanghari at her autograph signing of S magazine (she’s the March cover girl). She looks even more stunning in person.

During my tumultuous romance with Robin Padilla many heartaches ago, BB’s “former self,” Ruston Padilla, was always kind to me. When BB gave me a tight hug and told me, “It’s so nice to see you again,” I knew that she somehow remembers that crazy episode in my life. I replied, “Good to see you, too, now at a different time and dimension.”

Does she plan to settle down someday? “I’m barely legal,” she said, blushing. “But regardless of gender, I also want to love and be loved for the right and real reasons.” She unabashedly admits that her biggest crush is Richard Gomez.

What does he want to say to his detractors? “Wag na lang natin bigyang pansin ang mga kulang sa pansin. Negative vibes will just make us ugly.”

Watching BB get mobbed made me realize that her being true to herself is what makes her glow inside out. BBlib ka kay BB!

The ‘perfect comic’

By **MARINEL CRUZ**
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—Joey de Leon described his idea of a perfect comic: “He’s someone who writes his own scripts and is not afraid to share his jokes with fellow artists.”

Speaking to a group of writers at the launch of his new show “Joey’s Quirky World” last week, the 62-year-old award-winning actor and TV host declared: “Sorry na lang ang masasagasaan. If you’re the kind of comedian who doesn’t write (his own material), mababa ang rank mo sa akin.”

Potshots

As the interview progressed, Joey took potshots in reaction to comments made by another TV host from a rival station. “I pity a certain host from another channel,” Joey said. “Sinasarili niya ang trabaho. Yayaman ka nga niyan.”

Joey was referring to Willie Revillame, main host of the ABS-CBN noontime show “Wowowee,” who had

been quoted in tabloids with critical remarks against “Eat ... Bulaga.”

Joey shares hosting chores with best friends Tito and Vic Sotto on “Eat ... Bulaga!”

Shifting attention to another comedian, Joey recalled that while the late actor Rene Requiestas was never a writer, he admired him for his ability to “transform” in front of the camera.

The two actors worked together in comedy flicks like “Starzan,” “Long Ranger & Tonton” and “Elvis and James.”

“Rene was a different person when the cameras rolled. He was good at delivering his lines. He used to act in the theater,” Joey said. “After each take, he just sat in one corner and kept to himself. I never saw him eat anything on the set, always coffee or beer.”

Joey said he had wanted to make the sequel to “Starzan 4,” but Rene, who played his sidekick Cheeta-eh, died of tuberculosis in 1993. “I already finished the script. But I’m not too eager to do it now that Rene is gone,” the comedy actor said.

Dante Garcia, post-‘Ploning’

By **BAYANI SAN DIEGO JR.**
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—As follow-up to his acclaimed debut “Ploning,” director Dante Garcia has two big projects in the works: A drama-comedy with Dolphy and Judy Ann Santos, and a romantic-comedy with Ogie Alcasid and Santos.

In an exclusive interview with the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Garcia said he is “developing” a documentary made by broadcast journalist Howie Severino, titled “Lolo ng San Francisco,” into a feature film.

“It’s about a war veteran who hangs out at Union Square in San Francisco,” Garcia explained. “It’s very timely in light of the compensation package given recently by the US Congress to Filipino war veterans.”

Garcia hopes to cast King of

Comedy Dolphy as a grizzled ex-soldier who rents out chairs and timers to chess players on Market Street in San Francisco. (Severino’s docu was based on real-life octogenarian Floro Bagasala.)

“It’s my dream to work with Dolphy,” Garcia noted. “He can make people laugh and cry effortlessly. My peg for this movie is his performance in Lino Brocka’s ‘Ang Tatay Kong Nanay.’ It’s comedy, but it has a lot of heart and drama.”

He hopes to tap “Ploning” star Judy Ann Santos for the role of the war vet’s estranged daughter in the film, as well as Santos’ fiancé Ryan Agoncillo as a Fil-Am documentarian.

Other projects

Garcia is currently collaborating with “Ploning” writer BJ Ligan in writing the script of the new film titled “Saranggola sa Ulan.”



ENTERTAINMENT TIDBITS

Pops, Jomari part ways

MANILA, Philippines—Singer actress Pops Fernandez and boyfriend Jomari Yllana have decided to separate, the actor-producer confirmed.

In a text message to the Inquirer, Yllana cited “irreconcilable differences” as the cause of the break-up, which he announced nearly a month after he produced a successful reunion concert of Fernandez and her ex-husband Martin Nievera at the Araneta Coliseum.

“We broke up a few days ago,” Yllana said in his message. “We have differences that are irreconcilable. We share the same sentiments that we couldn’t get along anymore.”

But despite the end of their romance, “we parted ways in good terms,” he said.

Yllana had earlier planned a US tour of the Pops-Martin concert “Missing You.” (*INQUIRER.net*)

Not just hi, hello from Sarah

BACOLOD CITY, Philippines—

Sarah Geronimo made a young, cancer-stricken fan very happy recently when the pop singer sang to her over the cell phone.

Thirteen-year-old Metos Lachica of Barangay Don Salvador Benedicto, Pontevedra, Negros Occidental would have flown to Manila to meet her idol, Sarah, but this was ruled out because of her current state of health.

Instead, at 4 p.m. Sunday, Metos got a call from Sarah who asked her how she was.

Upon learning from Metos that her cancer had spread from her bones to her lungs, Sarah urged her to pray, after which she sang Metos’ favorite song, “How Could You Say You Love Me.”

“I was so happy she called,” Metos said. “And she even sang my favorite song.”

Sarah also promised to give Metos an autographed CD of her album “Just Me” and a DVD copy of her movie “A Very Special Love” with John Lloyd Cruz. (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*)

Maharlika – Opinyon

Impunity

More and more, I suspect that Barack Obama truly had Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in mind when he said in his inauguration speech: “Those who cling to power through corruption and deceit and the silencing of dissent, know that you are on the wrong side of history.” Well, maybe he also had Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe in mind, but that’s another story.

Barely had the idea sunk in the conscience of the world than the US Department of State issued a report condemning corruption, deceit, and the silencing of dissent in the Philippines. It was issued in the name of Hillary Clinton, the new secretary of state whom Arroyo finally nailed down to a photo-op after failing to do the same to her boss. The photo-op did precious little good, Clinton making it clear that the Obama administration took honesty, truth, and human rights deathly seriously. The last being a good reminder for Clinton as well, having invited some deathly serious flak from the international human rights community for saying that though human rights are important, she would not let it get in the way of economic relations with China. Another reason to thank heaven Obama, and not she, won the primaries. But that is still another story.

In its “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices in 2008, the Department of State spoke about corruption, deceit, and murder in the Philippines, all done epically by government, and done epically by government with impunity. Its language is characteristically restrained, but its censure is inescapable: “The law provides criminal penalties for official corruption; however, the government did not

implement the law effectively, and officials often engaged in corrupt practices with impunity.” The killings of journalists and political activists persisted, it said, though the number tapered off slightly last year in the wake of international condemnation and pressure. Corruption in the judiciary assured not just that justice would not be done but that injustice would be so, allowing as it did for murder, torture, forced disappearance, and summary executions, to be committed without fear or pity.

The report praised Chief Justice Reynato Puno’s efforts to do something about this madness. “The Supreme Court continued efforts to ensure speedier trials, sanction judicial malfeasance, increase judicial branch efficiency, and raise public confidence in the judiciary.”

Cerge Remonde, whose official designation is press secretary and whose unofficial one is court jester, says this is all a matter of perception, but the report in any case offers a half-full, half-empty view of the Philippines. I guess he’s the kind of person who, when the water rises above his nose, will observe gleefully that the other half of his face is still dry, but that in any case dying is a matter of perception. Such as you can make observations underwater, all the world will hear is a gurgle of bubbles.

However Malacañang tries to downplay the report, it will change neither the perception nor the reality. It is an important document, pointing as it does to two crucial developments.

The first I already mentioned last year in the wake of Obama’s victory, when several political analysts observed that that victory would not greatly affect Philippine-American relations. I disagreed, saying it would impact decisively on the Philippines’ observance of human rights, or total lack of it. Obama’s commitment to improving people’s lives, including keeping them alive, seemed genuine, something he never bothered to hide, or water down, during the campaign when he was being portrayed as a bleeding-heart liberal, or terrorist-loving tyrant-hater, by his opponent. (What’s his name now? He was on the wrong side of history and has been buried in the landslide.)



There's The Rub

By CONRADO DE QUIROS
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Since then, Obama has moved swiftly and visibly to scuttle Dubya’s legacy, short of encasing Muntadhar al-Zeidi’s shoes in bulletproof glass and putting it on display beside Abraham Lincoln’s giant statue. Including his propping up of Dubya-wannabes across the world. I did say the impact will be felt almost immediately by this regime. It has.

The second thing is that the report exposes Malacañang’s complete alienation from Washington. If at all that wasn’t already patent in Obama’s refusal to acknowledge the existence of one Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo even as she paraded herself before his eyes in gaudy colors. At that, alienation is too pale a word to describe it, the sensation being that of a sudden frosting, like the planet instantaneously turned into brittle solidity from the blast of cold at the onset of an Ice Age. What we see now is nearly exactly the same situation Ferdinand Marcos found himself in during the twilight days of martial law, when he was left out in the cold by Washington.

I say nearly exactly because Marcos continued to have a strong backer in President Ronald Reagan even as the Department of State began to wake up from its stupor and remember that America stood for freedom. Arroyo does not. More importantly, I

say nearly exactly because then the burden of action, if not proof, lay with the people and not with Marcos: The people had to do something to seize power, Marcos was dictator for life. Today, the burden of action, if not proof, rests with Arroyo and not with the people: She has to do something to keep power, she is dictator only up to next year.

That is where the report comes in. It is a warning sign lit in neon against any effort to stop the march of democracy or the retreat of tyranny, or both, intoning as it does: “Those who cling to power through corruption and deceit and the silencing of dissent, know that you are on the wrong side of Washington.”

Sometimes Washington is history. And history has been known to sweep off its dregs, with impunity.

EDITORIAL

After justice

What are we to make of the executive clemency President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo granted to the last 10 soldiers still serving time for the assassination, 25 years ago, of Ninoy Aquino (and also for the death of his alleged gunman Rolando Galman)? Our instinct is to decry the President’s obvious politicization of the pardoning process, and to express our outrage over the nation’s continuing failure to solve what has rightly been called the “Crime of the Century.” But hard as it may be to accept, pardoning the convicts after they had served almost a quarter-century in jail was probably the right thing to do.

To be sure, when the late opposition leader’s only son, Sen. Benigno “Noy” Aquino III, talks about the convicted soldiers’ apparent lack of appropriate remorse, we feel his pain. “They haven’t owned up to their sin. Why were they freed when they have yet to ask for forgiveness?”

Legally, there is no dispute. The President has the power to grant executive clemency to any convict who is qualified, and the soldiers, because their life sentences had already been commuted, were qualified for the state’s extraordinary exercise of grace.

Morally, a consensus is taking shape fast. For instance, the Catholic Church which has been a source of strength and solace to the Aquino family all through these years has spoken, through two leading bishops, of the pardon as an eminently ethical decision. Archbishop Oscar Cruz of Lingayen-Dagupan may have spoken for many when he said, “Justice, no matter how straightforward, should not fail its humane dimension, otherwise it becomes cruelty.”

To the EDSA democrat—the Filipino whose belief in the democratic project was renewed in the sudden spring of the People Power revolution—the pardon amounts to a test of faith.

It is critical to know who masterminded the assassination, because gallant and vital as countless other sacrifices made or endured before Aug. 21, 1983 were, it was Aquino’s “willing sacrifice of the innocent” that bloody Sunday which started the series of events that led, a thousand days later, to the People Power revolution on the EDSA highway.

But Ms Arroyo’s political tactics aside, what can the nation gain from seeing the soldier-convicts continue in jail? If the object was to punish them, no one will contest that they have suffered enough—and according to the law’s own standards. If the object was to rehabilitate them, the evidence of reformed lives is clear. But if the object was to force them, through incarceration, to reveal the truth behind the assassination, the fact that they have continued to say the same thing over and over again, the fact that they continue to tell the same unsatisfying story, should tell us that after a quarter-century we have nothing else, nothing more, to learn from them.

Time to let them go. After justice, mercy.

© Philippine Daily Inquirer

What is ‘Philippine’ or ‘national’?

During Lent and even other seasons, many Filipino homes regularly serve mongo soup on Fridays. Although mongo is high in uric acid and could contribute to an attack of gout, I always enjoy a steaming bowl of mongo especially if made deadlier with “chicharon” [crisp-fried pork skin]. While we are very lenient about fasting and abstinence during Lent, one notices that fast-food chains that make a killing on meat burgers and fried chicken put up Lenten specials that offer a fish option to the devout or to those on a diet. Seafood becomes an option during these days, leading some people to comment that Lent is not just a sacrifice for the appetite but also for the pocket because some fish, shrimp and shellfish can be slightly more expensive than beef or pork. But if expense is the problem, then fasting is the solution.

Last week, on Ash Wednesday and on the first Friday of Lent, I sat across from people at table with a dilemma: They had been served meat and didn’t know how to react. To them I repeated Oscar Wilde’s famous advice: “The best way to deal with temptation is to give in to it.”

There has been much email reaction to my column on “adobo” last week, especially from those who want schoolchildren and the general public to know “national” things. As I mentioned in that column, to my knowledge, there are only three things declared “national” by law: the sampaguita or *jasminum sambac* (national flower) and narra or *pterocarpus indicus* (national tree/wood), both of which were declared before the World War II, and more recently the Philippine eagle or *pitheophaga jefferyi*, more popularly known as the monkey-eating eagle, (our national bird and, not, as previously believed, the maya).

If you take a poll and ask people what our national animal is, they are likely to say it is the carabao or *bubalus bubalis carabensis*. It may come as a surprise to many Filipinos that the carabao is the national animal of Guam, having imported these hard-working, domesticated water buffalo from the Philippines in the 17th century.

We are in for more surprises, because one of the iconic symbols of Singapore, the merlion, was appropriated from Manila. The merlion has been associated with the “the distinguished and every loyal” City of Manila when its coat of arms was granted in 1596. Here we see a merlion, with the lion holding a sword aloft while its lower half is the graceful curled end of a dolphin’s tail.

Most Filipinos generally agree that Jose Rizal is the national hero, but some people insist that it should be Andres Bonifacio. During the preparations for the 1998 Philippine Centennial, President Fidel V. Ramos wanted to settle this issue by legislation because to-date



Looking Back

By AMBETH OCAMPO
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

there is no law declaring Rizal our national hero; Rizal has always been regarded as such by acclamation and tradition. A group of historians was assembled and after discussion, our pantheon was arranged into national heroes and local heroes. Thus, Rizal, Bonifacio, Mabini, Aguinaldo, Jacinto, Luna, etc. are all national heroes, but from this list Rizal emerged as the prime national hero. The conclusions and recommendations were transmitted to Ramos who, in his wisdom, took no action.

How do we deal with people who persist in proclaiming themselves in praise releases as “national artist”? They are not in the roster of national artists, and the Cultural Center of the Philippines or the National Commission for Culture and the Arts should officially call their attention on this before shaming them publicly for misrepresentation. Can we say that National Bookstore is indeed the Philippines’ national bookstore when its founder Socorro “Super Nanay” Ramos admits that when she opened shop over seven decades ago, she was at a loss on what to call her bookstore, and then she saw the word “national” on her cash register. Needless to say, that cash register has been busy ever since.

Is the word “national” restricted to government agencies? For example, the National Printing Office or the National Bureau of Investigation or the National Statistics Office are government agencies, but can the words “Philippine” and “national” be used by private concerns. For example, the Philippine National Bank and Philippine Airlines that used to be government owned are now in private hands. Do they continue to be Philippine and National? Two rival historical associations are called the Philippine Historical Association and the Philippine National Historical Society. There are many other examples, like the Philippine Bar Flunkers Association. I am just wondering aloud, but should we regulate or at least define what is “Philippine” and what Filipinos should consider “national”?

There is no argument when it comes to: our national flag, our national anthem (“Lupang hinirang,” not “Bayang magiliw,” which are the first two words of the anthem), and the Great Seal of the Republic as described in our Constitution. We have no argument with sampaguita, narra, and the Philippine eagle that have been declared national by law. But look at Wikipedia, which has become the bible of this generation. This website has fed us “unofficial” national symbols, like carinosa (national dance), anahaw (national leaf), mango (national fruit), etc. We are in for an exciting debate on this issue once the can of worms is opened.

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu.

Maharlika–Samu't Sari



DOUBLE CELEBRATION

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Welcome to Christian world to Rochelle Alvarado, who was christened last Saturday, Feb. 21, 2009, at the St. Jude Parish Church in Koblerville, Saipan.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Belated happy birthday to Jaime Alvarado, who celebrated her birthday on the same occasion last Saturday, Feb. 21, 2009, at Canton Restaurant on Beach Road, Saipan. Greetings come from your Dad, Raffy Alvarado (not in photo).



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Mom Cherylyn poses with the twin celebrants, Rochelle Alvarado and Jaime Alvarado.



LION CITY VISITORS

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Former Saipan residents Dennis Bognot, wife Lyn, and son Gio pose with staff of Singapore Zoo.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Dennis Bognot, wife Lyn, and son Gio at Singapore Zoo.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Dennis Bognot, wife Lyn, and son Gio at the National Orchid Garden in Singapore.



GUEST SPEAKER

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

IT&E president and chief executive officer Ricky Delgado speaks to members of the Saipan Rotary Club on Tuesday to discuss his company's plans in the CNMI. At left is Rotary Club president Ben Babauta.



ATOP MT. TAPOCHAO

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Guam visitor Julius Sotomayor checks out one of the educational signs at the peak of Mt. Tapochao during a visit to the island on Feb. 21, 2009. The sign tells of what happened during the Battle of Saipan in World War II.



BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Belated happy birthday to Alexander "Clinton" Nario who celebrated his birthday on Sunday, Feb. 22, 2009, at the Kilili Pavilion. Greetings coming from the Santo Nino Group of Saipan. Picture shows the celebrant, kneeling, mugging for the camera with his barkada, from left, Maria, Maria Lou, Zack, Bless, Donelle, Johara, Gary, and Marverick.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Julius Sotomayor and Alexie Zotomayor have their picture taken with the statue of Jesus Christ located at the peak of Mt. Tapochao, the highest point on Saipan. The mountaintop is a popular tourist site on the island.

YoungStyle

An inventive mind: Engineer loves finding new solutions to problems

By **STEPHEN LOWMAN**
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON—Nate Ball liked to build things when he was kid. He made mud dams, launched bottle rockets and once nearly burned down the house trying to make rocket fuel. Now he is 25 and an engineer. If he looks familiar, it's probably because you've seen him on the PBS TV show "Design Squad." It's National Engineering Week, so KidsPost talked with Nate to find out why he loves being an engineer.

Q. Did you always want to be an engineer?

A. I didn't know I wanted to be an engineer at all. I did grow up building stuff and had a lot of fun creating things and solving problems. When I figured out that was connected with what engineers do for a living, I thought, engineering is exactly what I want to do.

Q. What kinds of problems are engineers interested in solving?

A. Improving people's lives is one of the most rewarding things engineers can work on. Engineering spans this huge breadth of activities and problems. You might be solving manufacturing problems on an assembly line or helping to design some new kind of food or fashion.

Q. What were some of the things you built as a kid?

A. In about fourth grade I made a pop-bottle rocket launcher that would shoot two-liter bottles really high in the air using air and water pressure. I took it into school, and it was a big hit with all my friends. I also built traps to drop laundry on my sister's head when she walked into my room



THE WASHINGTON POST

It's National Engineering Week, so KidsPost talked with Nate Ball, of the PBS TV show "Design Squad," to find out why he loves being an engineer. Ball co-founded a company that makes this device, which lets users climb buildings quickly.

Meet Nate Ball

Kids can meet Nate Ball on Saturday at the National Building Museum, 401 F St. NW in Washington, as part of Discover Engineering Family Day. Drop in between 10 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. to check out Lego Robot races, build newspaper bridges, concoct slime, participate in other simple engineering

feats and watch Nate rise to the top of the museum using one of his inventions.

Activities are designed for kids ages 5 to 13. It's free, but a \$5 donation would be welcome. For more information, you and your parents can check out www.nbm.org. (The Washington Post)

when I didn't want her to. I did all kinds of fun projects when I was a kid that required me to solve real engineering problems. I just didn't know it at the time.

Q. Did your projects ever fail?

A. During a chemistry experiment in high school, I tried making my own rocket fuel. During the process, I ended up substantially burning the kitchen when some of it managed to catch on fire. There was quite a bit of damage. Fortunately, my dad had been really adamant about getting the fire extinguisher ready just in case something happened. I had to go back and look at what I could have done better for the next time.

Q. Is it true you invented a hovercraft in the sixth grade?

A. Yeah, it was powered by a vacuum cleaner running backwards to create air pressure. I admit it was a bit of disappointment for me as a sixth-grader. I imagined myself floating all over the neighborhood on my new hovercraft. It was mostly good for sliding smoothly across the kitchen floor. But it was still a lot of fun!

Q. What should kids be doing if they are interested in engineering?

A. The cool thing is that engineering can connect with everything. Start wondering about how things work. How are they made? Where do they come from? Imagine ways to invent new solutions to your own problems around the house. If you don't want to make a peanut butter sandwich for yourself in the morning, wouldn't it be cool if you figure out how to design a machine that could help you make it at a touch of the button? That's a good introduction to the type of stuff we do."

By **FRED BOWEN**

Special to The Washington Post

Fred Bowen writes is an author of sports novels for kids.



Caps' Ovechkin is good. But will he be great?

This hockey season I have been wondering: How good is Alexander Ovechkin going to be?

The Washington Capitals' star left winger leads the National Hockey League (NHL) in scoring with 44 goals. And he seems to do something incredible every game.

One way to get some idea of how good Ovechkin may become is to check out some of the great players in NHL history whose scoring statistics were similar to Ovechkin's.

This season Ovechkin, 23, became the fifth player in NHL history to score 200 or more goals in his first 300 games. The other players who accomplished that amazing feat are Wayne Gretzky, Mario Lemieux, Mike Bossy and Brett Hull.

That's a high-powered, Hall of Fame list. But it's hard to compare Ovechkin to the Great Gretzky or Super Mario because Gretzky and Lemieux played center. Gretzky and

Lemieux scored plenty of goals, but they also set up their teammates with pinpoint passes.

Ovechkin plays wing. Although he gets some assists, his main job is to score goals. So let's take a look at the careers of the two hard-shooting, high-scoring wings on the list, Bossy and Hull. They are more like Ovechkin.

Bossy was an amazingly consistent scorer for the New York Islanders from 1977 to 1987 who scored 50 or more goals in each of his first nine seasons.

The good news for Ovechkin and Capitals fans is that Bossy helped the Islanders win four consecutive Stanley Cup championships from 1980 to 1983. The bad news is that Bossy's career was cut short by a back injury. Bossy was only 30 years old when he retired after the 1986-87 season.

Brett Hull, who played from 1986 to 2006, was the son of legendary hockey great Bobby Hull. The father was called "the Golden Jet" because of his speed and blond hair. The son was called "the Golden Brett."

Both Hulls could score. Brett Hull put up incredible statistics early in his career, scoring 86 goals for the St. Louis Blues during the 1990-91 season as well as 70 or more goals in two other seasons. He scored 741 goals during his career, the third-highest total in NHL history.

Despite all the goals, Hull bounced around a bit, playing for five teams during his 20-year career. There's little chance Ovechkin will leave Washington. Last year, he signed a 13-year contract that should keep him with the Caps for a long time.

It's clear that Ovechkin's scoring skills, so far, have put him in elite company. If he stays healthy and the Capitals keep their other young stars (forwards Alexander Semin, Nicklas Backstrom and defenseman Mike Green), Ovechkin may match and even surpass Bossy and Hull in goals—and Stanley Cup championships.



The National Zoo's whistling orangutan

WASHINGTON—Having trouble learning to whistle? Perhaps you can get a few tips from Bonnie, the National Zoo's whistling orangutan.

An orangutan that whistles?

Yes, and there's more.

Bonnie often walks on two legs, like humans. And you can find the 32-year-old great ape copying her keepers by sweeping the floor of her zoo home with a handful of hay. Sometimes she grabs a rag to clean the windows.

"Orangutans in general are incredibly intelligent, but Bonnie is definitely even more so," said Erin Stromberg, a great-ape keeper who works with Bonnie and recently wrote a research paper about her ability to whistle. "She never misses a beat. She is highly intelligent and very inquisitive."

The 142-pound Bonnie is one of six adult orangutans at the National Zoo. Orangutans are primates, a group of animals that includes monkeys, gorillas and, yes, human beings!

Primates are mammals with large brains and opposable thumbs, which allow them to grasp something and hold on.

Bonnie and other great apes are part of a research project at the zoo's Think Tank. Scientists there are trying to learn more about the way the great apes think and act.

One part of the project is to learn whether orangutans can develop a strategy to remember long lists.

Stromberg helped with a project on Bonnie's unusual ability to whistle. Years ago Bonnie started to whistle, probably after hearing a keeper do it. In the project

Stromberg made different whistling noises to see if Bonnie could repeat them. She did.

Orangutans aren't known to whistle and had been thought to have a set number of sounds. Bonnie's whistling shows that some apes have the ability to learn a new sound from another species.

Why is that important?

Because, Stromberg said, it can help scientists better understand how human speech developed. Great apes, after all, are the closest relatives to human beings in the animal kingdom, she said.

Bonnie was born in 1976 at the Albuquerque zoo in New Mexico and arrived at the National Zoo in December 1980. Bonnie has physical traits common to orangutans: a large belly and a forehead that slopes out.

Life & Style

Chris Brown appears in court on felony charges

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Chris Brown briefly appeared in court Thursday, hours after he was charged with two felonies stemming from what a police detective describes as a brutal argument between the singer and his girlfriend, Rihanna.

Brown's arraignment was postponed until April 6 on charges of assault likely to cause great bodily injury and making criminal threats. The 19-year-old R&B singer remains free on \$50,000 bail.

A court commissioner ordered him not to harass, threaten or harm anyone. At the request of Donald Etra, an attorney representing Rihanna, the commissioner did not order Brown to

stay away from her.

Brown, wearing a three-piece gray pinstripe suit with gray tie and cream shirt, clasped his hands behind his back as he walked into the courtroom. He answered a few questions from the commissioner as his mother watched from the front row along with a group of family members.

Details released Thursday offer a starkly different portrait of Brown than the squeaky-clean image he has cultivated. The young man once praised for his Michael Jackson-esque dance moves is described in a detec-

tive's affidavit as punching his girlfriend, biting her ear and trying to choke her until she nearly lost consciousness.

He rose to fame after the 2005 hit "Run It!" and his popularity has only grown. He was nominated for a Grammy for "No Air" with Jordin Sparks and named Billboard's top artist in 2008.

His arrest prompted an exodus of sponsors and a retreat into secrecy for both Brown and Rihanna. The couple were among the marquee names scheduled to appear and perform at the Grammys Feb. 8, but the al-



Brown

leged attack forced both to cancel their appearances.

The courtroom was filled Thursday with onlookers and media for Brown's brief appearance. He and his attorney did not speak to reporters after the hearing.

The felony complaint handed down in court Thursday morning identifies Brown's alleged victim only as "Robyn F." (Rihanna's real name is Robyn Rihanna Fenty.) The "Disturbia" singer's attorney, Etra, also identified her as Brown's alleged victim.

Etra declined to say whether Rihanna would testify against Brown, or whether the couple had

reunited. "I'm not here to discuss the relationship," he said.

If convicted, Brown's possible sentence ranges anywhere from probation to four years and eight months in state prison, said district attorney's spokeswoman Sandi Gibbons.

According to a detective's affidavit, Brown and Rihanna got into a fight early Feb. 8 after she checked her boyfriend's cell phone and found a text message from another woman.

Brown pulled his car over and tried to push Rihanna out, but she was still wearing her seatbelt, Los Angeles police Detec-

tive De Shon Andrews wrote. Brown pushed Rihanna's head against the window, punched her with his right hand, and then continued driving while hitting her, the affidavit states. He also bit his girlfriend on the ear, the affidavit states.

The affidavit was filed as part of a search warrant request for the phone records of Brown, Rihanna and her assistant.

Brown allegedly threatened to kill Rihanna after she pretended to leave a phone message with her assistant, telling her to have the police waiting at her house.

Capitol Hill goes gaga over Brad Pitt

By LAURIE KELLMAN
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

WASHINGTON (AP)—First of all, no, Brad Pitt is not short. Yes, he's handsome enough to stand out in any crowd. And, sorry, Angie wasn't with him.

From the moment he stepped into the Capitol on Thursday, sunglasses and goateed, Pitt's star power transformed congressional business-as-usual in a way any lawmaker or new president might envy.

Pitt's superpowers are such that he and President Barack Obama pulled off an improbably secret meeting on the same topic earlier in the day, White House spokesman Thomas F. Vietor confirmed.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi was not immune to his charms. Praising Pitt for his work to rebuild New Orleans' hurricane-ravaged 9th Ward, she even allowed that meeting him affords her "bragging rights to my children and my grandchildren—a real treat for me as well."

And during a closed meeting earlier, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid confided to Pitt that he was envious that his lieutenant, Majority Whip Dick Durbin, got to meet soccer star Mia Hamm a day earlier, according to one person who was present and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Well, Pitt replied, he'll bring along co-parent Angelina Jolie next time to help Reid make Durbin jealous, this person said.

Later, a Durbin aide sniffed: "Durbin's already met Angelina Jolie."

These officials demanded anonymity because the meeting was private and they did not want to be caught gossiping about a movie star.

The Power of Pitt drained entire congressional offices of their female employees and quite a few male aides as well, all of whom could be picked out by the way they suddenly appeared in the Senate's doorways and halls, nonchalantly cupping



AP

Actor Brad Pitt, center, stands with House Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi of Calif., left, and House Majority Whip James Clyburn of S.C., prior to their meeting on Capitol Hill in Washington, Thursday, March 5, 2009, to discuss Pitt's project for affordable, environmentally-sustainable housing for low-income residents of the Lower 9th Ward in New Orleans.

cell phones and cameras at their sides and hanging around waiting news crews.

Finally, around 1:30 p.m., Pitt, four aides and assorted security guards climbed out of a darkened SUV at the Capitol's north gate and strolled across the sun-dappled plaza.

As he approached the building, all nonchalance inside disappeared. Was he coming in the carriage entrance? No! He was coming through the North Door.

And so he did, entering through the famous Brumidi corridor, whose ornate and historic paintings he probably couldn't see through his sunglasses. Reporters, photographers and giggling staffers shuffled after him, up a flight of stairs and around a corner toward Reid's office. As Pitt entered the parlor, he took off his shades. An aide closed the door behind him.

Inside with Reid, Pitt made an earnest case for nationalizing his "Make It Right" campaign, in partnership with Congress, according to a sec-

ond knowledgeable aide who spoke on condition that he not be named because the meeting was private.

Afterward, this official said, Reid and Pitt posed for pictures, the senator cracking, "How will people tell us apart?"

Outside the door, grinning Capitol Police officers put up ropes to keep the hordes out of the path Pitt was expected to take toward his next meeting, with Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., in a building across the street.

Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., the Judiciary Committee chairman who has appeared as himself in several "Batman" movies and even had a speaking line in "The Dark Knight," stumbled across the crowd gathered outside Reid's door.

Told who was inside, Leahy issued a giddy, "Gosh!" and kept walking.

In the end, Pitt and his entourage slipped out a side door and took an elevator to the basement subway.

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Watchmen

Friday 4:00 7:05 10:15
 Saturday 1:00 4:00 7:05 10:15
 Sunday 1:00 4:00 7:05
 Mon and Tues 4:00 7:05

Malin Akerman, Billy Crudup
 Action, Adventure • Rated R

Synopsis

In the 1950s, a seemingly ordinary guy puts on a mask and a superhero costume and starts to fight crime. He is joined by a bunch of others who take up the same pursuit, until a law is passed that forces them to hang up their capes. When a few of the former crimefighters are mysteriously murdered, the remaining members set out to solve the crimes.



Slumdog Millionaire

Friday 4:20 7:00 9:45
 Saturday 1:05 4:20 7:00 9:45
 Sunday 1:05 4:20 7:00
 Mon and Tues 4:20 7:00

Dev Patel, Anil Kapoor
 Comedy, Drama • Rated R

Synopsis

Today is the biggest day in Jamal Malik's life. A penniless, eighteen year-old orphan from the slums of Mumbai, he's one question away from winning a staggering 20 million rupees on India's "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?" But when the show breaks for the night, suddenly, he is arrested on suspicion of cheating. After all, how could an uneducated street kid possibly know so much?



Love Me Again

Friday 4:25 7:20 9:50
 Saturday 1:30 4:25 7:20 9:50
 Sunday 1:30 4:25 7:20
 Mon and Tues 4:25 7:20

Piolo Pascual, Angel Locsin
 Love, Romance, Drama • Rated PG

Synopsis

Arah (Angel Locsin) dreams of a better life—different from the life she knows in Bukidnon. Ranches everywhere are closing one by one. The glory her hometown once knew was slowly disappearing in favour of life abroad, particularly in Australia. Arah believes this too. Australia will save them from poverty. But Migo (Piolo Pascual) does not share this belief. He believes that Bukidnon's glory will return if only people didn't leave. Migo is Arah's first love.



The Uninvited

Friday 4:05 7:25 9:35
 Saturday 1:20 4:05 7:25 9:35
 Sunday 1:20 4:05 7:25
 Mon and Tues 4:05 7:25

Elizabeth Banks, David Strathairn
 Horror, Remake • Rated PG 13



Push

Friday 4:15 7:30 9:40
 Saturday 1:10 4:15 7:30 9:40
 Sunday 1:10 4:15 7:30
 Mon and Tues 4:15 7:30

Chris Evans, Dakota Fanning
 Thriller Supernatural • Rated PG 13



Pink Panther 2

Friday 4:10 7:10 9:30
 Saturday 1:15 4:10 7:10 9:30
 Sunday 1:15 4:10 7:10
 Mon and Tues 4:10 7:10

Steve Martin, Andy Garcia
 Comedy, Mystery • Rated PG



Taken

Friday 4:30 7:15 9:55
 Saturday 1:25 4:30 7:15 9:55
 Sunday 1:25 4:30 7:15
 Mon and Tues 4:30 7:15

Liam Neeson, Maggie Grace
 Action, Drama, Thriller • Rated PG 13

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Publicist: Robin Williams needs heart surgery

Top 13 finalists chosen on 'American Idol'

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Thirteen turned out to be the lucky number for Anoop Desai on "American Idol."

After announcing the three remaining finalists at the end of Thursday's wild card round, Simon Cowell announced that the much-loved 22-year-old college student from Chapel Hill, N.C., won a previously unannounced 13th spot in the next round of the popular Fox singing contest. In past seasons, 12 finalists were picked to move on.

"We decided—recently—we're going to make this a top 13," Cowell revealed.

The three other wild-card finalists were Jasmine Murray, the big-voiced 16-year-old high school student from Starkville, Miss.; Megan Corkrey, the quirky 22-year-old single mother from Sandy, Utah; and Matt Giraud, the soulful 23-year-old dueling piano player from Kalamazoo, Mich.

The previously dismissed foursome were selected by the show's judges.

Desai's last-minute selection wasn't the night's only seemingly unscripted moment. After oh-so-emotional semifinalist Tatiana Del Toro performed Whitney Houston's "Saving All My Love For You," she knelt and pleaded for a spot from the judges. Then, host Ryan Seacrest came on stage and told her she didn't have to get up off her knees.

MIAMI (AP)—Robin Williams needs heart surgery and must cancel the remainder of his one-man comedy show, "Weapons of Self-Destruction," his publicist said Thursday.

The 57-year-old actor needs an aortic valve replacement, according to a news release issued by his publicist Mara Buxbaum. Williams' representatives would not give any more information on Williams' condition.

"I'm so touched by everyone's support and well wishes," Williams said in the statement.



Williams

"This tour has been amazing fun and I can't wait to get back out on the road after a little tune-up."

Williams was already in Florida when he canceled four shows in the state earlier this week after experiencing shortness of breath.

Former first lady Barbara Bush, 83, was recovering well from her aortic valve surgery this week, her doctors said.

Since September, Williams had been on the sold-out, 80-city tour, which is expected to resume in the fall, his publicist said. Tickets will be honored

once the new dates are scheduled, or people can contact their place of purchase for refunds.

The Academy Award-winning actor got his start as a standup comedian in the 1970s. His high-energy act led to a guest spot on "Happy Days" as Mork from Ork and later the starring role on "Mork & Mindy."

He has appeared in dozens of feature films—both comedies and dramas—over nearly three decades. He won an Oscar for Best Supporting Actor for his role in the 1997 film "Good Will Hunting." Other notable films include "Dead Poets Society," "Hook," "Mrs. Doubtfire" and Disney's "Aladdin."

'Slumdog' becomes millionaire 200 times over

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The milestones just keep coming for "Slumdog Millionaire": After winning eight Academy Awards, including best picture, the feel-good indie has now crossed the \$200 million mark in worldwide box office.

As of Thursday afternoon, "Slumdog" had grossed nearly \$217 million from theaters around the globe. It made \$12 million the weekend after it dominated the Feb. 22 Academy Awards, a healthy 43 percent improvement over the previous weekend, and came in at No. 3 behind two movies with strong built-in audiences, "Tyler Perry's Madea Goes to Jail" and "Jonas Brothers: The 3D Concert Experience."

By contrast, previous best-picture winner "No Country for Old Men" had a worldwide gross of just more than \$162 million, while Martin Scorsese's star-studded "The Departed" from 2006 made nearly \$290 million worldwide.

"Slumdog Millionaire" tells

the story of an 18-year-old orphan who rises from the streets of Mumbai to become the biggest winner ever on India's version of "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire." Director Danny Boyle's film had a budget of about \$15 million, featured no well-known stars and is partly in subtitled Hindi, but it's wowed audiences and critics alike.

Steve Gilula, co-chief operating officer for Fox Searchlight, which released "Slumdog," said he expects the movie will go past \$250 million globally.

"It's extraordinary," Gilula said. "Very, very few films get past \$200 million worldwide."

Comparatively, another small

Searchlight movie that made it big, 2007's "Juno," made \$230 million worldwide.

Gilula attributes the global success of "Slumdog Millionaire" to a couple of factors. One is the international nature of the setting, the cast and the Oscar-winning filmmakers—Boyle and screenwriter Simon Beaufoy are British, for example, and composer A.R. Rahman is from India. The other is the attention it got from winning top honors at the Golden Globe Awards, given by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, and Britain's BAFTAs.

"All of that comes together to create a phenomenon," he said.

Jewel, Nancy O'Dell drop 'Dancing With the Stars'

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Pop star Jewel and TV host Nancy O'Dell have dropped out of ABC's "Dancing With the Stars."

Both women sustained injuries during training for the show that prevent them from continuing the competition, the network announced Thursday. Jewel was

diagnosed with a fractured tibia in both legs, while the "Access Hollywood" host will need surgery to repair a torn knee cartilage, the network said.

A replacement for at least one of the women may be announced during Monday's season premiere, said executive producer Conrad Green.

"Obviously this has caught us a bit by surprise," he said, adding that any replacement would have "literally a couple of days to learn the routine, as opposed to a month."

"The show will go on," Green said. "But really, our thoughts are with Jewel and Nancy. It's such a tough blow for them and just horribly bad luck."

Jewel and O'Dell are the first contestants in eight seasons of "Dancing" to withdraw because of injuries sustained during pre-

show training, Green said. Olympian Misty May dropped out last season after tearing her Achilles tendon during the competition.

Contestants could see their training time limited in future seasons, Green said.

"Usually the drama happens once the show has begun, not before the it starts," he said.

Jewel said in a telephone interview Thursday that she initially dismissed the pain in her legs as soreness from the show's six- to eight-hour daily rehearsals.

She eventually sought treatment and was "completely shocked" by the diagnosis.

"The doctor just looked at me and said, 'You're done dancing,'" she said.

The 34-year-old singer-songwriter said she is in pain and using crutches and will have to be seated to perform her next two shows—scheduled for Thursday near Los Angeles and Saturday in Seattle.

"It's my first time sitting down in a concert," she said.

Jewel and O'Dell are still slated to appear on the show's season premiere Monday.



O'Dell

Jokes about psychiatrist's couch aren't amusing to wife

By **ABIGAIL VAN BUREN**
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



DEAR ABBY: Will you please explain to your readers that doctors do not practice medicine 24 hours a day? Each time we reveal to people that my husband is a psychiatrist, we have to put up with unfunny jokes about how he's going to analyze them, or insinuations that all he does is sit on a couch and ask, "And how do you feel about that?" How should we respond to these misconceptions?

Dear Abby

NOT LAUGHING IN IOWA

DEAR NOT LAUGHING: The attempts at humor are not a reflection on your husband or the psychiatric profession. They are a clue that the person may be afraid that if he or she opens up and talks with him, he may realize that he or she is "crazy."

Your question takes me back to my childhood, when our family lived in the Midwest and the first psychiatrist moved to the city and opened a practice. For months, no one would talk to the poor man for exactly that reason.

When people "joke" that your husband is going to analyze them, he should smile and say, "Don't worry—I'm off duty." (If I were in his shoes, I'd be tempted to ask, "... and how do you feel about that?")

■■■

DEAR ABBY: I am being married in the fall. Ever since I was 11, I have had a wonderful beagle. She sleeps in my bed and I take her everywhere. She cuddles with me and has been there for me during some of the most terrible times in my life. I treat her like she's my baby.

Abby, I want my dog to attend my wedding. One of my best friends—one of my bridesmaids—says a dog shouldn't be allowed to attend the wedding. I say she should be. Who is right?

BRIDE-TO-BE IN ALABAMA

DEAR BRIDE-TO-BE: I have heard of dogs not only attending weddings, but also being part of the bridal party. However, whether your four-legged companion will be welcomed at your wedding may depend on how the person who officiates feels about it—and that is the person you should consult.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: I am at a loss as to how to deal with family members who constantly text others while supposedly visiting us or when we're having dinner out together.

I personally find it rude, but I am reluctant to ask them to put it away. Do you have a snappy comment for me?

NON-TEXTER IN A TEXTING WORLD

DEAR NON-TEXTER: What your family members are doing is extremely rude. The message it sends to you is that your company is boring and the person would rather be elsewhere. (Indeed, the person who is texting IS elsewhere.) Tell your family members that when they visit, you would prefer they keep their electronic devices off until they leave. (If this happened while I was hosting a meal, I think I'd ask for separate check and tell them why.)

■■■

DEAR READERS: For those of you who live where Daylight Saving Time is observed, I offer a gentle reminder. Don't forget to turn your clocks forward one hour before you go to bed tonight because Daylight Saving Time begins at 2 a.m. tomorrow.

■■■

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

■■■

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order "How to Be Popular." Send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$6 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

ENTERTAINMENT TIDBITS

Former Monkees member says he has cancer

MANSFIELD, Conn. (AP)—Peter Tork, a former member of the 1960s pop group the Monkees, says he has a rare form of head and neck cancer, but the prognosis is good. The 67-year-old Tork had surgery Wednesday in New York. His spokeswoman says he is doing well and will begin radiation treatment after a short recovery period. He announced on his Web site Tuesday that he has been diagnosed with adenoid cystic carcinoma on the lower region of



Seinfeld

his tongue. He says it's an uncommon but slow-growing type of cancer, and it hasn't spread beyond the initial site. From 1966 to 1968, the Monkees had a popular TV show and three No. 1 hits, "Last Train To Clarksville," "I'm A Believer" and "Day-

dream Believer."

'Seinfeld' stars guest on 'Curb Your Enthusiasm'

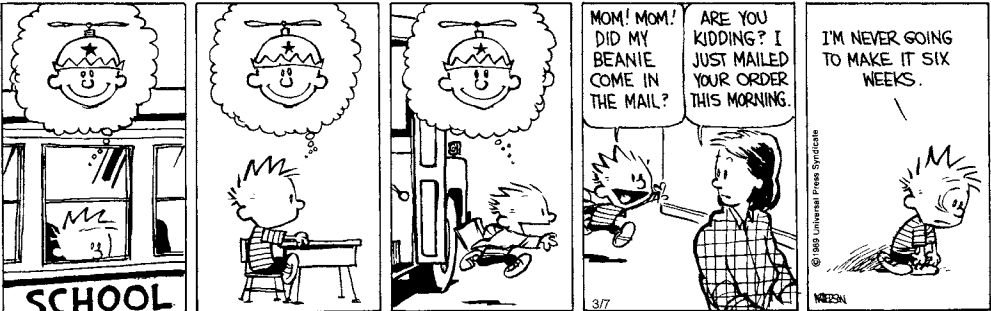
NEW YORK (AP)—"Seinfeld" isn't coming back, but its stars will be together again this fall on HBO. The network says that Jerry Seinfeld, Julia Louis-Dreyfus, Jason Alexander and Michael Richards will appear in several episodes of "Curb Your Enthusiasm." The HBO comedy stars Larry David, who helped create "Seinfeld." HBO wasn't giving

out any other details about the appearances, which were first reported on the Entertainment Weekly Web site <http://www.ew.com>. But they are sure to be eagerly anticipated by fans of "Seinfeld," which continues to be shown frequently in syndication.

Pastimes

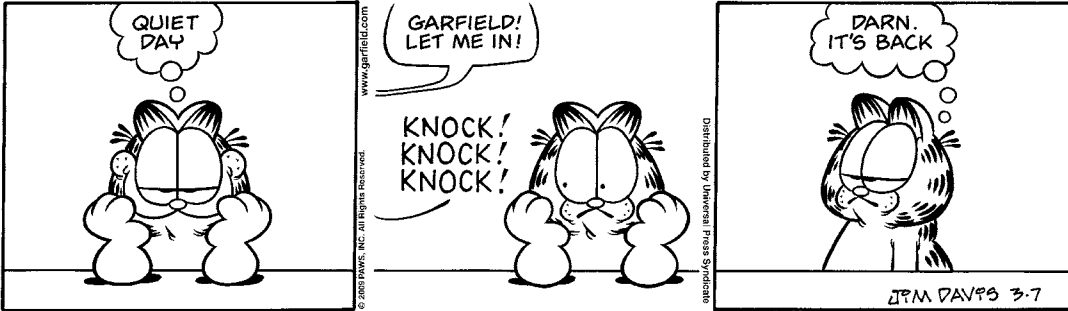
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



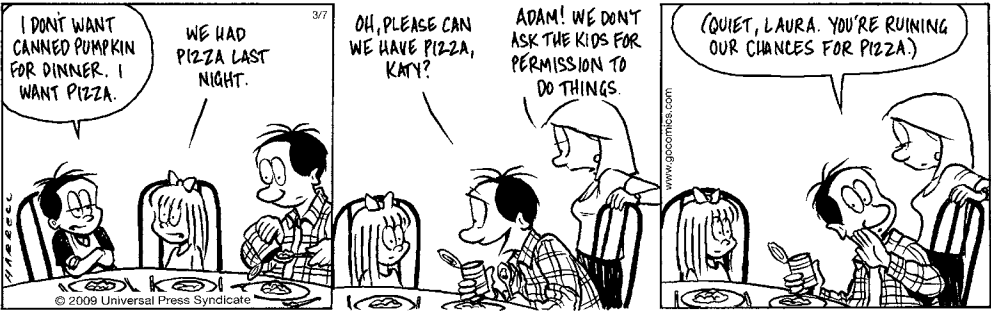
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Ponzi schemes, e.g.
6 Soul
12 Put a hex on
13 La Scala shows
14 Not alfresco
15 Most updated
16 Culture medium
17 BPOE members
19 "Eureka!"
20 She loved Narcissus
22 A welcome sight?
24 Illustrations
27 Chops
29 Wait patiently
32 Old sitcom starring Walter Brennan
35 Early hours
36 A-line creator
37 Lepidopterist's device

DOWN

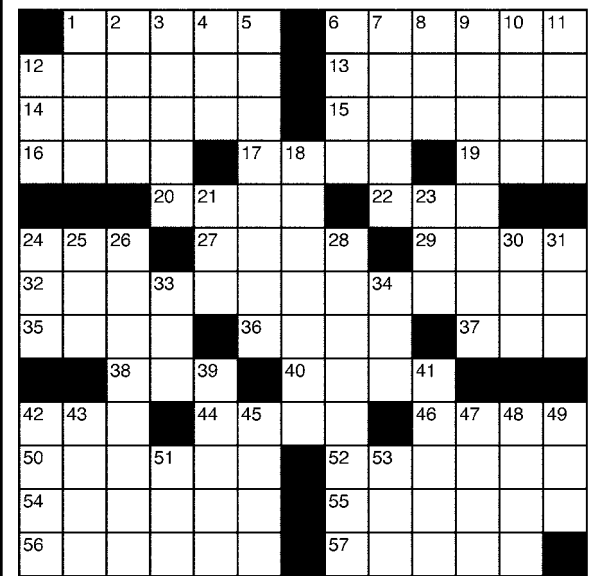
1 Medley component
2 Last few notes
3 Put on a pedestal
4 Cattle call
5 Grouch
6 11th president
7 Tic
8 Still
9 Genesis subject
10 Leftovers recipe
11 "Como — usted?"
12 By way of

38 Snoop Dogg's genre
40 Vaudeville family
42 Kona keepsake
44 Help a hood
46 Small combo
50 Apennine region
52 Lloyd of old movies ...
54 ... described thus
55 OK to munch on
56 Has a rendezvous

57 Basic procedures, idiomatically
18 Immoral sort
21 Ernesto Guevara
23 Regis' network
24 \$ dispenser
25 Pi follower
26 Quite
28 Not so bumpy
30 Do Easter eggs
31 "Guinness Book" suffix
33 Geneticist's abbr.
34 Wail
39 Emulate Michelangelo
41 Denude
42 A Deadly Sin
43 Eastern bigwig
45 Dugout supply
47 Judicial garb
48 Troubles
49 Praise in verse
51 — judicata
53 Commotion

Solution time: 27 mins.

Yesterday's answer 3-7



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CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Paul Cattermole, 32; Jenna Fischer, 35; Daniel J. Travanti, 69; Willard Scott, 75

Happy Birthday: Move quickly to take advantage of the opportunities heading your way. This year, hesitation is the enemy. Think forward and forget about whatever has held you back in the past. Avoid secretive action. There is no time for games or guessing. Stick to your agenda. Your numbers are 6, 8, 17, 24, 29, 33, 41

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You must follow through, not just make idle threats. You may question a love relationship. Do whatever you must to either make it better or move on. You can't stay in limbo personally or professionally. ***

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): You'll be emotional about personal issues and reforms you feel are necessary to help a cause you believe in. Take action before you let the stress of the situations take over. Don't wait for someone else to make a move. **

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Love is on the rise. You can now approach someone you care for and make a commitment. Whether you are already involved, have been in the past or it's someone altogether new, now is the time to make your move. ****

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Love can develop in strange ways but, if a conflict of interest is involved, take a pass. Don't travel to visit someone you don't know that well. Someone will be withholding information vital to a decision you are considering. ***

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Feelings will rise to the surface, bringing you greater reason to make a move that you've been contemplating. If love is on the line, there is no room for error. Follow your heart. ***

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): A professional change may unnerve you but don't show your angst. Continue to do what's expected of you and more and you will be the one to advance. Push a little harder by putting in overtime. A change in a partnership will be good. ***

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Take on projects that are creative and turn them into something unique. Your insight and trendy applications will dazzle the people you are trying to impress. Network, communicate and put your heart on the line personally and professionally. ****

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Emotional matters will arise. If you back away, you will upset the dynamics in your household but, if you engage, you will be up for a difficult fight. Do something that you know the person you have a conflict with will enjoy. ****

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You'll be able to convince others to do as you say but, if you haven't thought matters through or have asked for the impossible, you will be questioned. Stick to what you know and don't exaggerate your plans or your abilities. ***

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Emotions will be difficult to control, especially when it comes to love and

EUGENIA LAST
THE LAST WORD
IN ASTROLOGY

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relationships. Now is not the time to push someone for an answer, especially if it has to do with commitment or a contractual arrangement. ***

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Love is on the rise. Your outgoing nature will help you win hearts and get ahead both personally and professionally. Getting involved in a new line of work or taking on an additional job will lead to greater friendships and increased self-esteem. ***

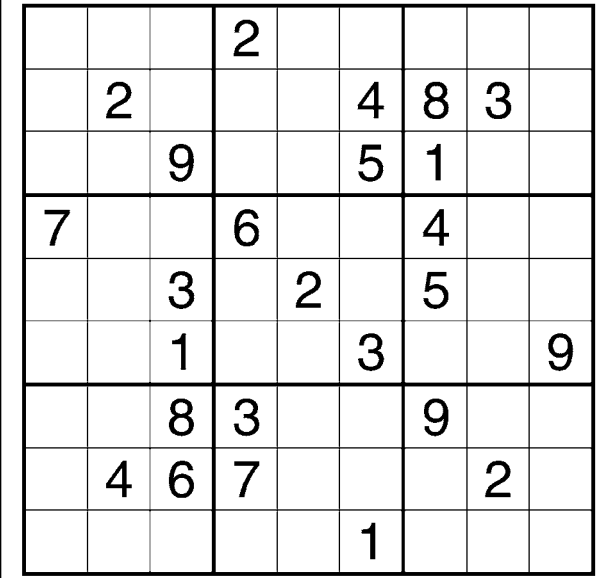
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Follow your heart. An unusual subject will interest you. Get involved in the making of something that is cutting edge and you will get recognition for your contributions. *****

Birthday Baby: You are creative, intelligent and not afraid to do things differently. You are outgoing, thoughtful and intent on helping others.

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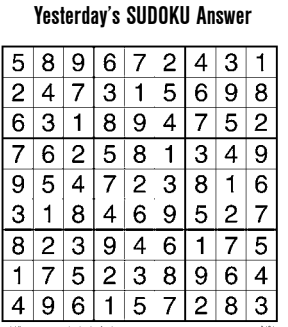
SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green



Difficulty Level ★★★★★ 3/07

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.



Difficulty Level ★★★★★ 3/06

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

ABALONE										Solution: 8 letters									
I	S	E	I	C	E	P	S	C	A	L	C	I	U	M					
R	R	E	G	N	A	D	N	E	G	U	A	G	O	U					
I	E	O	V	A	L	U	G	D	E	L	I	T	M	T					
D	X	M	N	D	F	N	S	E	L	E	H	L	O	T					
E	P	W	R	M	A	E	I	T	H	E	I	C	L	O					
S	O	A	E	O	R	P	K	S	R	E	I	T	L	N					
C	R	T	T	K	M	O	I	O	L	A	N	H	U	F					
E	T	E	A	N	S	L	F	B	R	A	L	A	S	I					
N	L	R	N	I	O	P	A	I	I	E	N	I	K	S					
T	E	E	O	P	E	E	C	G	R	C	A	D	A	H					
T	N	Y	B	A	G	R	O	T	C	U	D	D	A	E					
H	N	A	R	N	R	E	V	L	I	S	A	O	Y	L					
I	A	L	A	L	G	A	E	H	C	T	A	C	O	L					
C	H	H	C	O	L	O	R	G	N	O	R	T	S	F					
K	C	O	R	E	R	C	A	N	A	M	I	B	I	A					

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2/7

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Yesterday's Answer: Soul mates
We received your request! THE WONDERWORD is the first ever Wonderword book containing only 25 x 25 puzzles, with 75 of these large puzzles. To order, send check or money order for \$19.95 each plus \$3.25 p&h (\$18.20 total each, U.S. funds only) for the first volume, \$4.50 p&h for each additional volume, to Wonderword, Universal Press Syndicate, 1130 Walnut St., Kansas City, Mo. 64106 or call toll-free 1-800-642-6480. Order online at upuzzles.com.

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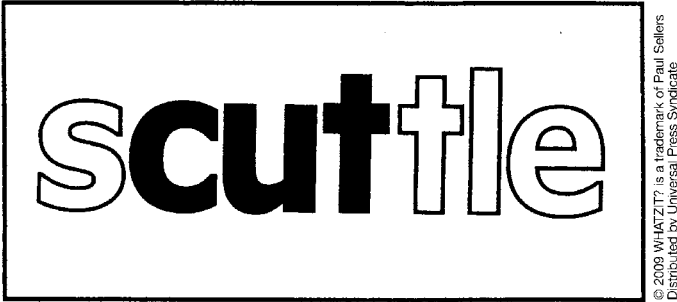
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235-NEWS

Cowboys release star Terrell Owens



IRVING, Texas (AP)—Jerry Jones made it clear, both in action and words: Getting rid of Terrell Owens means a fresh start for the Dallas Cowboys.

T.O. was released Thursday, ending a three-year run that produced as many big headlines as big plays. Many of those headlines were about ego and attitude, and Jones has decided enough is enough. He wants the focus on winning, something the Cowboys haven't done in the playoffs since 1996.

"In the aftermath of the season, we talked about change," Jones said in a statement. "Some of what is changing involves the process and some of it involves people. This is a decision that was made based upon consideration for an entire team."

"We will move on now with a new team—a new attitude—and into a new stadium. The evaluation process and the prospect for change will continue at every level of the organization."

Owens released a statement on his Web site thanking Jones, coach Wade Phillips and the organization "for the opportunity to be a member of the team for the past three years."

"A big thanks to the fans—you've been awesome! I look forward to the upcoming season and continuing to play in the NFL," Owens added.

Owens caught more touchdown passes than any NFL re-

ceiver over the last three years and was a big part of Tony Romo's emergence from an unknown backup to a starlet-dating Pro Bowl quarterback with a \$67 million contract.

Yet the Cowboys went 0-for-2 in the playoffs with Owens, and didn't even make it this past season. Dallas' late-season collapse—capped by a lackluster effort in a win-and-you're-in finale in Philadelphia—emphasized that a new approach was needed.

Jones was slow to go along. Just a few weeks ago, he indicated Owens wasn't going anywhere and firmly said the idea of locker-room problems were "a figment of the result. You didn't hear about those things when we were winning."

Dallas also released safety Roy Williams on Thursday. Despite his reputation as a hard-hitter, teams never hesitated throwing his way in recent years because he struggled in coverage. After Owens, Williams likely was the second divisive figure among Cowboys fans—especially after Dallas already got rid of Adam "Pacman" Jones and Tank Johnson.

"Roy has been a wonderful representative of this organization since coming to Dallas," Jones said. "Unfortunately we have reached a crossroad with his time here in Dallas and the difficult decision was made to allow him to explore other opportunities in the NFL."

Cutting Owens and Williams will cost the Cowboys about



A Penn State fan holds up a sign in reference to Terrell Owens being released from the Dallas Cowboys during the second half of Penn State and Illinois NCAA college basketball game in State College, Pa., Thursday, March 5, 2009.

\$14 million against the salary cap. There's no telling how much more Dallas will lose in jersey sales and other publicity Owens generated. Then again, the \$1.1 billion stadium that's opening next season should

generate plenty of interest and souvenir sales.

Owens learned he was being cut Wednesday night and sent text messages to his friends. Cowboys receiver Sam Hurd said Owens' reaction was "more

shock than anger."

"He didn't give me an explanation. He just said, 'Wow,'" Hurd said Thursday. "I really didn't believe that he seen that coming. ... He said it's tough, but it's a business."

Allenby leads, Compton contending at Honda

PALM BEACH GARDENS, Fla. (AP)—Robert Allenby has contended at the Honda Classic each of the last two years, so it's no surprise for him to be atop the leaderboard at PGA National.

Erik Compton's day, however, was far from expected.

Allenby shot a 4-under 66 Thursday to take a one-shot lead after the opening round at PGA National, surviving a day when the wind blew flags straight and the only solace for players was receptive greens. He had a tap-in on the par-4 ninth—his final hole—to break away from what was an eight-way tie for the lead.

Allenby missed a 2 1/2-footer on the previous hole, so he left nothing to chance on the last, hitting a 6-iron to 6 inches.

"I just sort of played within myself, took one or two clubs more when it was into the wind, tried not to force it and just tried to feel my way around the golf course," said Allenby, who lives just a couple miles from PGA National and finished tied for fourth and tied for fifth in the last two years there.

By the time darkness suspended play, six players—Charlie Wi, Jeff Overton, Angel Cabrera, Stewart Cink, Will Macken-

zie and Sergio Garcia—all were one shot behind Allenby.

But the big story was Compton, the South Florida native who underwent heart-transplant surgery for the second time last year.

He made a triple-bogey on his second hole, which would have deflated some. Compton, however, said it was the kickstart he needed.

With his nearly 2-week-old newborn getting pushed along in a stroller, Compton birdied three straight holes after making the turn and got to 1 under when play was stopped in his second PGA Tour event since the lifesaving procedure.

He'll return Friday morning, trying to get up and down from 30 yards at the par-4 8th.

"I'd rather sleep on being 1 under than hitting a (crap) tee shot, then hitting a chip shot when I can't see the grain and couldn't see what's going on," Compton said. "I'm only three back. I played really well despite having a triple."

A foursome of players, including Chris Riley, shot 68s to be two off Allenby's lead.

And then there was Mathias Gronberg, who endured whatever the opposite of a feel-good story is.

Gronberg was 1 over through six holes, a fairly nondescript beginning. The last 12 holes, well, they were ones that he'll likely never forget.

Put it this way: He didn't even manage to play bogey golf.

Gronberg had three triple-bogey in a four-hole span on the back side, became the first player to shoot 50 over nine holes since

Phil Taturangi at Greensboro nine years ago - excluding Billy Casper, whose 106 in the first round at the 2005 Masters officially went into the books as a WD because he didn't turn in the card.

Gronberg saved par at the 18th to shoot a staggering 89, 19 over par - the 31st time this year someone has failed to break 80 in a PGA Tour round, and two shots worse than Robert Floyd's 87 in the third round at Pebble Beach. Floyd shot 80-80-87 that week.

"That's a record for me," Gronberg said.

Cink was coming off a third-

What's next for T.O.?

It remains to be seen what kind of market there is for a 35-year-old with a proven track record—good and bad.

Owens is among the NFL's career leaders in catches, yards and touchdowns. Over the last three years, his 38 touchdowns are one more than Randy Moss and he's among the league's best in catches, yards, yard per catch and yards per game.

But the Cowboys are his third team and all three have gotten rid of him because of personality, not performance.

Al Davis and the Raiders might be interested. Or maybe Daniel Snyder will want to add another big-name star to the Washington Redskins, especially to take advantage of the animosity T.O. might bring to his two games a year against the Cowboys and the Eagles.

"I don't think (being released) is going to stop him from playing football," Hurd said. "He's going to be back on somebody's team."

Don't look for him to replace Laveranues Coles on the Jets. The team has no interest in Owens because of the distractions he'd bring, a person familiar with the team's thinking told The Associated Press on Thursday.

The Cowboys signed Owens in March 2006, despite the bitterness some fans had for him having celebrated on the team's star logo while playing for the 49ers. At his introductory news conference, Owens declared, "Getcha popcorn ready" and he certainly kept things interesting.

Japan blanks China 4-0 in opener of WBC

TOKYO (AP)—Japan began the defense of its title with a 4-0 win over China in Thursday's opening game of the World Baseball Classic.

Seattle Mariners outfielder Ichiro Suzuki went hitless in five at-bats but Shuichi Murata hit a two-run homer in the bottom of the third inning to spark Japan's offense.

Japan is in Pool A of the 16-nation tournament with Olympic gold medalists South Korea, China and Taiwan providing their opposition.

The top two teams advance to the second round, which will be played in the United States along with the final on March 23 at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles.

Playing before a near-capacity crowd of 43,428 at Tokyo Dome, Japan took a 3-0 lead in the bottom of the third. Hiroyuki Nakajima scored from second on a single to center field by Norichika Aoki for Japan's first run.

Murata then connected for a two-run homer to left field off China starting pitcher Li Chenhao, who took the loss.

Japan widened its lead to 4-0 in the sixth when Kosuke

Fukudome came home from third on a balk by China relief pitcher Sun Guogiang.

Suzuki, who has struggled in tuneup games leading up to the tournament, returned to the leadoff spot after batting third but couldn't get a hit.

Japan starter Yu Darvish struck out three, walked one and gave up no hits over four scoreless innings to pick up the win.

China is managed by former major league manager Terry Collins, who also has managerial experience in Japan with the Orix Buffaloes.

Given the results of three years ago when it lost to Japan 18-2, Thursday's performance showed improvement by China.

China's batters managed five hits off Japan's pitchers.

South Korea faces Taiwan on Friday with the winner taking on Japan on Saturday.

Japanese home run king Sadaharu Oh, who guided Japan to the championship three years ago, threw out the ceremonial first pitch. Oh was unable to manage Japan in this tournament because of health reasons.



Melo returns and Nuggets hold off Trail Blazers



DENVER (AP)—As promised, Carmelo Anthony sprinted straight to the bench when coach George Karl sent in a sub this time.

Anthony scored 38 points in his return from a one-game suspension for refusing to come out of a game last weekend, and he led the Denver Nuggets past the Portland Trail Blazers 106-90 Thursday night.

Anthony didn't get many breathers in this crucial Northwest Division showdown, logging 38 minutes as he helped the Nuggets avoid falling out of first place for the first time since Dec. 8. Anthony's point total was his second highest of the season and his 16 baskets tied his season high.

When he rejoined his teammates at practice Wednesday after watching Denver's 100-95 loss at Detroit from the team hotel the night before, Anthony insisted he didn't agree with his suspension. But he pledged that the next time Karl tried to take him out, "I'm going to run. I'm going to run to the bench. I'm going to run hard to the bench."

He did just that.

With 10:55 left in the game, the Nuggets ahead 85-70 and Rudy Fernandez at the line for Portland, the horn blew and Nene summoned Anthony from the sideline. The team captain sprinted from the other side of the court to his seat on the bench as the crowd at the Pepsi Center applauded and Karl smiled.

On Sunday night at Indiana, Anthony refused Karl's orders to come out in the third quarter of a tight game for Linas Kleiza, reasoning he had the hot hand and deserved to stay in. Karl called it insubordination and suspended him for a game.

Brandon Roy scored 22 points for the Trail Blazers, who were trying to



Denver Nuggets forward Carmelo Anthony (15) celebrates with teammate Chauncey Billups (7) against the Portland Trail Blazers during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Denver, Thursday, March 5, 2009.

ascend to the top of the division this late in the season for the first time since 2001. LaMarcus Aldridge added 19 points despite an upset stomach.

The Nuggets had Anthony back in uniform, but were without another starter, Kenyon Martin (lower back), and also backup point guard Anthony Carter (hip), both of whom are day to day.

Martin was replaced in the lineup by Johan Petro, and the Nuggets activated Jason Hart, who was claimed off waiv-

ers from the Clippers this week to be their third point guard behind Chauncey Billups and Carter.

Before tip-off, Karl suggested his star had learned a valuable lesson and everyone on the team had put the episode behind them.

"Melo's conversations with me now are probably going to be more frequent, because I want him to understand we need him," Karl said. "You saw the Detroit game, we didn't have a closer. We

played a damn good basketball game and we didn't have a closer."

This time, they didn't need their closer, taking an 81-70 lead after three quarters and staying ahead by double

Van Gundy shrugs off barbs, calls Shaq 'sensitive'

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—Stan Van Gundy walked into the Orlando Magic locker room Thursday morning, and before he could even prepare for practice, his players had a message.

"You better leave Shaq alone," forward Rashard Lewis told him.

And with that, the Flop-Flap continued.

A day after Shaquille O'Neal called his former coach with the Miami Heat "a master of panic" and "a frontrunner," Van Gundy responded by jokingly calling O'Neal a "very sensitive guy." He said everyone needs to "consider the source" before taking the comments too seriously.

The Magic coach said he didn't take O'Neal's remarks personal, but admitted O'Neal may have gone too far—even for his usual jokes.

"That's not his normal comments," Van Gundy said after Orlando's practice Thursday. "Obviously I struck a nerve and hurt his feelings. Shaq's a very sensitive guy. If I hurt his feelings, I'm sorry."

The feud started after the Magic's 111-99 win over O'Neal's Phoenix Suns on Tuesday.

O'Neal was guarding Magic center Dwight Howard with about 4 minutes left in the third quarter. Howard made a spin move, O'Neal fell in an apparent flop trying to get an offensive foul called, and Howard easily dunked with two hands.

Afterward, Van Gundy said he was surprised by O'Neal's move. "I was

shocked and very disappointed cause he knows what it's like. You know, let's stand up and play like men, and I think our guy did that."

And of course, O'Neal responded.

"One thing I really despise is a front-runner," O'Neal said Wednesday before the Suns' game in Miami. "I know for a fact he's a master of panic and when it gets time for his team to go into the postseason and do certain things, he will let them down because of his panic. I've been there before. I've played for him."

The relationship between Van Gundy and O'Neal has been rocky for years.

O'Neal arrived in Miami for the 2004-05 season, helped the Heat win 59 games that season playing alongside Dwyane Wade and with Van Gundy on the sideline. But that season ended with a loss to the Detroit Pistons, a game where Miami squandered a six-point lead over the final 7 minutes. After the game, O'Neal said he didn't get the ball enough.

Van Gundy resigned 21 games into the next season, Pat Riley returned to the bench and the Heat won a championship, O'Neal's fourth title.

"I'm pretty sure that every player who's ever played for me doesn't hate me," Van Gundy said Thursday. "Now we'd have to do a survey, but I've coached a lot of guys, and I'm pretty sure there's one or two that don't hate me. I don't know that any liked me. But I'm pretty sure there's one or two who don't hate me. So I don't worry about

that because, quite honestly, I don't think it's true."

Magic players defended their coach but refused to take a jab back at O'Neal.

"We like him," Lewis said of Van Gundy. "I mean, sometimes we don't because he screams and yells all the time, but that's just a part of him being the coach. As long as we continue to win games, you can't complain too much."

Howard has long been ridiculed by the O'Neal for his use of the Superman nickname—one they have both claimed. O'Neal has also called out Howard, saying he hasn't done anything in Orlando he hadn't done before.

On Thursday, Howard again sidestepped any barbs at O'Neal. But when asked if he tries to take charges or has ever attempted a flop, Howard said that's not a center's role.

"They've been trying to get me to take charges, and I just can't do it," Howard said. "When we do charge drills in practice, I don't like them. Like I tell my guys, I'm not taking a charge. If I'm 7 feet, I'm supposed to be blocking a shot."

Van Gundy said he was joking when he made the comments and didn't lose any sleep when O'Neal responded. He considers the feud over, but realized O'Neal may again fire back.

"I started it. I made my comment," Van Gundy said. "If you're going to dish it out, you've got to be able to take it. And I can take it."

digits the entire fourth period. Anthony took a seat for good with 1:42 left and Denver up 103-87.

J.R. Smith's 36-foot shot from beyond halfcourt gave Denver a 53-44 halftime lead.

Billups was a tad late on a similar shot at the end of the first quarter, when he stole the inbounds pass with a second left and sank the long basket.

It doesn't get any easier for the Nuggets, who headed to Salt Lake City to face the third-place Utah Jazz, who have won nine straight games and sliced a six-game deficit two weeks ago to 1 1/2 games.

Hornets 104, Mavericks 88

At New Orleans, Chris Paul had 27 points and 15 assists, and the New Orleans Hornets increased their season-best winning streak to six with a victory over the Dallas Mavericks.

David West scored 19 and Rasual Butler 18 for the Hornets, who haven't lost since center Tyson Chandler returned to the lineup from a left ankle injury—and rescinded trade—last week. Chandler's minutes were limited by foul trouble, but he still finished with 11 rebounds and 10 points, slamming down several alley-oop feeds from Paul.

Dirk Nowitzki led Dallas with 27 points and Jason Kidd added 13, but the Mavericks faded during the last 10 minutes as the game turned into a blowout.

from their coach and veteran players.

Drew Gooden joins Spurs for playoff run

SAN ANTONIO (AP)—Drew Gooden arrived at his sixth team in seven years Thursday with the hope that he finally found a permanent home. The future can wait. The San Antonio Spurs got Gooden to win now. Finally getting the additional big man San Antonio had long been seeking, the Spurs signed Gooden for the remainder of the season after the 6-foot-10 power forward bought out his contract in Sacramento earlier this week. Gooden bolsters the frontcourt depth San Antonio has sought despite holding the second-best record in the Western Conference most of the year. He has played just two games since Jan. 19 because of injuries, and Spurs general manager R.C. Buford said Gooden had not yet undergone a physical. Gooden, however, sounded confident in his health. He did not know whether he would play in San Antonio's next game Friday against Washington. "I might have to get a practice in, to go over what we're going to run offensively and defensively, but other than that I'm ready to play," said Gooden, who has been hobbled by groin and lower abdominal strains. Gooden has averaged 13.1 points and 8.7 rebounds this season in 32 games, all but one of which came in Chicago. The Bulls traded Gooden to the Kings in a six-player deal last month, but Gooden played only one game with Sacramento on Feb. 25. The Spurs had about \$1.5 million remaining in their midlevel exception to offer Gooden. Sacramento agreed to an undisclosed buyout of Gooden's \$7.1 million salary in the final season of his contract.

NBA BRIEFS

Iverson says he'll do 'whatever it takes'

AUBURN HILLS, Mich. (AP)—Allen Iverson says he will come off the bench if that's what's best for the Detroit Pistons. Iverson attended the team's practice on Thursday after visiting doctors at Georgetown University in Washington. He said in a statement that he's disappointed the soreness in his back will force him to miss two weeks, but doctors told him treatment and rest are best. Iverson said his goal hasn't changed since arriving: to help the Pistons win a championship. He says he'll do "whatever it takes" - "regardless if I'm starting or coming off the bench." Iverson has missed three straight games. Detroit is six games under .500 with Iverson starting, which coach Michael Curry says Iverson won't do when his back is healthy enough for him to play.

Telfair ready to return as Wolves head west

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Sebastian Telfair is planning on returning to the lineup of the Minnesota Timberwolves. The point guard missed the past two games because of a sore groin muscle, but he practiced fully Thursday and pronounced himself fit to return to the court Friday in Los Angeles to face the Lakers. The Timberwolves (18-42) also face the Portland Trail Blazers on Saturday. Coach Kevin McHale ended Thursday's practice by imploring his downtrodden team to focus on effort rather than result against the league-leading Lakers. The Wolves have lost seven straight games. The Wolves' 24-point loss to the Golden State Warriors on Tuesday prompted an exasperated response

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Boston	48	14	.774	—
Philadelphia	29	30	.492	17 1/2
New Jersey	27	34	.443	20 1/2
New York	25	35	.417	22
Toronto	23	39	.371	25

Central Division

x-Cleveland	48	12	.800	—
Detroit	30	29	.508	17 1/2
Milwaukee	29	35	.453	21
Chicago	28	34	.452	21
Indiana	27	37	.422	23

Southeast Division

Orlando	44	16	.733	—
Atlanta	34	27	.557	10 1/2
Miami	32	28	.533	12
Charlotte	26	35	.426	18 1/2
Washington	14	47	.230	30 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

San Antonio	40	20	.667	—
New Orleans	38	22	.633	2
Houston	39	23	.629	2
Dallas	37	25	.597	4
Memphis	16	44	.267	24

Northwest Division

Denver	39	22	.639	—
Portland	38	22	.633	1/2
Utah	38	23	.623	1
Minnesota	18	42	.300	20 1/2
Oklahoma City	16	45	.262	23

Pacific Division

LA Lakers	49	12	.803	—
Phoenix	34	27	.557	15
Golden State	21	40	.344	28
LA Clippers	15	47	.242	34 1/2
Sacramento	13	49	.210	36.5

Yesterday's Games

Denver 106, Portland 90
New Orleans 104, Dallas 88

x-clinched playoff spot

HONDA CLASSIC SCORES

FIRST ROUNDR

Robert Allenby	66
Charlie Wi	67
Jeff Overton	67
Angel Cabrera	67
Stewart Cink	67
Will MacKenzie	67
Sergio Garcia	67
Kent Jones	68
David Mathis	68
Y.E. Yang	68
Chris Riley	68
John Mallinger	69
Billy Mayfair	69
John Rollins	69
John Merrick	69
Jeff Klauk	69
Michael Allen	69
Nathan Green	69
Nicholas Thompson	69
John Senden	69
Brian Bateman	69
Steve Marino	69
Heath Slocum	69
D.A. Points	69
Chris Stroud	69
Jason Caron	61
Erik Compton	61
Jeff Maggert	70
Kevin Streelman	70
Bob Estes	70
Michael Letzig	70
Justin Leonard	70
Shaun Micheel	70
Brad Adamonis	70
Darren Clarke	70
James Nitties	70
Bart Bryant	70
Miguel Angel Jimenez	70
Woody Austin	70
Ben Crane	70
Brandt Jobe	70
Rory McIlroy	70
J.J. Henry	71

Tim Wilkinson	71
Matt Kuchar	71
Lucas Glover	71
George McNeill	71
Jonathan Byrd	71
Joe Ogilvie	71
David Berganio Jr.	71
Jerry Kelly	71
Shingo Katayama	71
Brett Quigley	71
Alex Cejka	71
Johnson Wagner	71
Paul Goydos	71
Tadd Fujikawa	71
John Huston	72
Briny Baird	72
Cliff Kresge	72
Greg Owen	72
Todd Hamilton	72
Brian Gay	72
J.B. Holmes	72
Chris DiMarco	72
Carl Pettersson	72
Harrison Frazer	72
Spencer Levin	72
Gary Woodland	72
Robert Garrigus	72
Fredrik Jacobson	72
Tim Herron	72
Scott McCarron	72
Boo Weekley	72
Steve Lowery	72
Jason Dufner	72
Scott Piercy	72
Brendon de Jonge	72
Bill Lunde	72
Casey Wittenberg	67
Brendon Todd	64
Tommy Armour III	73
Rocco Mediate	73
Eric Axley	73
Olin Browne	73
Ryan Palmer	73
Richard S. Johnson	73
Scott Verplank	73
Ernie Els	73
Davis Love III	73
Camilo Villegas	73
Derek Fathauer	73
Aron Price	73
Nick O'Hern	73
Justin Rose	73
Greg Chalmers	73
Martin Laird	73
Andres Romero	73
Marc Leishman	73
Leif Olson	69
Greg Kraft	74
Marc Turnesa	74
Alan Morin	74
Matt Bettencourt	74
Brian Davis	74
Jonathan Kaye	74
Peter Lonard	74
Ted Purdy	74
Stuart Appleby	74
Mark Calcavecchia	74
Ken Duke	74
Jimmy Walker	74
Colt Knost	66
Rick Price	66
Jose Coceres	75
Steve Flesch	75
Troy Matteson	75
James Oh	75
Jay Williamson	75
Brad Faxon	75
Mark Wilson	75
Jarrod Lyle	71
Billy Andrade	76
Ricky Barnes	76
Peter Tomasulo	76
Robert Gamez	76
Chris Couch	76
Chez Reavie	76
Jason Bohn	77
Scott Gutschewski	77
Tim Petrovic	77
Ryan Moore	77
Bill Haas	77
Brian Vranesh	77
Tom Pernice Jr.	77
Matt Weibring	78
Glen Day	78
Vaughn Taylor	79
Brandt Snedeker	79
Sal Spallone	81
David Duval	82
Mathias Gronberg	89

By The Associated Press

LAGUNA

From Page 28

able. Contact Tasi Tours or Saipan Sea Ventures for details and schedules.

For visitors wishing to compete, several excellent condition Hobie 16s are available for charter for \$250, payable at registration. Interested individuals may contact Tony Stearns at tstearns@itecnmi.com for details and arrangements.

Registration is \$75 per person and will cover the cost of

boat entry, two lunches, a T-shirt, and the awards dinner.

"The Over the Reef Yacht Club Laguna Regatta has been a longtime favorite of local Hobie enthusiasts," said Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Perry Tenorio. "We look forward to as many visitors as possible competing or enjoying the race as spectators."

The awards dinner will be held Sunday at 6pm at 360 Revolving Restaurant.

For more information, visit the Over the Reef Yacht Club website at <http://otryc.org>. (PR)

Jets zoom to 17-7 win over CPA

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER



Joeten Motors bounced back with an easy 17-7 win against Commonwealth Ports Authority in one of two make-up games Tuesday night in the Budweiser Inter-Government/Business Slow-pitch Softball League at the Capital Hill Ballpark.

The Jets zoomed to a 10-4 lead after two full innings en route to completing the win in just six innings via the 10-run mercy rule.

Lead batter Jason Hayes and pitcher J.J. Laniyo scored four

runs each, while shortstop Cliff Silil added three to lead the offense for the Jets, which climbed from seventh to fourth place in the team standings.

Laniyo went 2-for-2, including one of two homeruns for the team. He did it in the top of fourth.

The other homerun came from right fielder Ben Taisacan in the second. Taisacan went 2-for-4 at bat, including six RBIs and two runs.

Centerfielder J.J. Cabrera had three RBIs and one run. The other run scored by the Jets came from Jeff Tenorio and Jess Taitano.

Left fielder Frank Robert also hit a homerun in the second inning but that hardly mattered in the game for CPA, which fell

from fifth place to seventh place with a 10-3 win-loss record.

Docomo 17, Legislature 5

Docomo needed just five innings to demolish Legislature, 17-5, and improved its ranking from fourth to third with a 12-4 card.

Still in the lead is Department of Community and Cultural Affairs (17-0), while occupying second is Freedom Air (12-3).

Docomo started with three runs in the top of the first inning following a two-run homerun by shortstop Payton Sakuma.

Then Gloyd Martin hit another homer.

In the bottom of he first, five Legislature players—Dave

Apatang, Mitch Aaron, Fonze Tarope, Ben Camacho, and Dennis Cabrera—reached home plate in succession and the team took a 5-3 lead for full two innings.

Legislature never scored after that as Docomo pitcher Leo Bobai allowed only three hits in the next three innings.

Docomo rallied with four runs in the third, six in the fourth, and four in the fifth.

Sakuma finished with five RBIs, three runs, one homerun, and a triple on a 4-for-4 performance.

John Acosta had four runs, four RBIs, three hits, and a double. Martin added three runs, three RBIs, one homerun, a double on 3-of-4 at bat.

RGA to hold golf clinic for youth

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER



With the Northern Marianas Junior Golf League shelving its training sessions for the youth, Refaluwasch Golf Association has decided to take the cudgels in proving golf lessons junior to CNMI kids.

RGA tournament director Jess Wabol said the club is planning to tie up with the Division of Youth Services in conducting a golf clinic this year.

"DYS is holding an annual youth camp and we are planning to take part in that camp and hold a golf clinic for the youth," Wabol said.

The Division of Youth Services' Summer Youth Sports and Empowerment Camp is usually held in July and runs for three weeks with participants learning to play various sports and other fun and productive activities, such as coconut weaving, sand painting, and face painting.

"RGA will be holding meetings in the coming months to discuss further details of the clinic," said Wabol, adding that golf instruction sessions under NMJG were last held in 2006 at the LaoLao Bay Golf Resort.

"NMJG was very active with the promotion of junior golf in the CNMI, two to three years ago when Laolao was still under UMDA [United Micronesia Development Association].

Now with a new management at Laolao and with the current economic crisis we are facing, the program just stopped," Wabol said.

"We understand the situation. But RGA would still want to reach out to kids who have interest in playing golf so in coordination with DYS, we will be conducting a clinic this summer," he added.

Meanwhile, Wabol is encouraging members to support the Inaugural San Jose Church Fundraising Golf Tournament, which is set for March 14 at the Kingfisher Golf Links.

Wabol said the fundraiser will also serve as a March qualifying tournament for the club.

RGA members competing in

next weekend's will pay \$20, besides the entrance fee of \$100.

Tee time for the San Jose Church golfset is set for 7:30am, while check in time is at 6:30am.

Prizes will be given to the top three placers in both the men's and women's low gross categories. First placer will get \$300, \$200 for second, and \$100 for third.

In the low net division, which is a co-ed event, the champion will take \$300, \$250 for the runner-up, and \$150 for the third placer.

For more information about the San Jose tournament, contact Manny Mangarero at 235-2609 or 878-4499, Rev. Fr. Jesse Reyes at 234-6991 or 483-PALE, Jess Wabol at 233-3673, or Jerry Ayuyu at 286-1400.

MARIANAS

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Games in Doha.

Hiromi Suzuki, 30, also from

Saitama stands 6'1". She started playing in high school. She joined the Ito Yokado team in 1997 and was selected as a member of the national team for the World Championships in 1998.

In 2006, Suzuki made the switch to beach volleyball and joined the professional beach volleyball team, the Leoplace Winds. She partners with Satoko Urata.

In addition, the Marianas Cup Kids Tournament for youth ages 10-15 years is scheduled tomorrow at PIC. The co-ed format requires four players and only costs \$5 per person.

AZTECS

From Page 28

home plate on wild pitches by Ayuyu. The pitcher's mistakes allowed the Aztecs to move within a run, 3-4.

Hustlers outfielder Nico Martin then equalized the score at 4-4 on his lone run in the game on another Ayuyu wild pitch.

Ayuyu's replacement didn't do too well either as Tony Rogolofoi Jr. allowed four more runs in the top of the seventh inning as the Hustlers took the lead, 8-4.

John Pangelinan did manage to score a run for the Hustlers, but Aztecs reliever Nick Cruz shut them down, retiring the next three batters on fly balls.

Aztecs now share the lead with D9ers, the team they lost

to in their first game by the narrowest of margins. Both are now on top of the Big League division at 2-1.

Aztecs lost to D9ers, 8-7, last Feb. 21 but bounced back with a 13-2 blowout win against IT&E Fielders.

Despite the back-to-back wins, Aztecs team manager Glenn Dikito said his players still committed a lot of mental lapses.

"Our offense is good. I'm confident with our defense. I know my players because I handled them four years ago in the Majors but they still lack mental toughness," said Dikito.

The Aztecs' next game will be against defending champion Tanapag Falcons on March 17. The Falcons sport a 1-1 record, same as the Hustlers.

MINOR

From Page 28

Minor advanced to the finals after outclassing second seed Terea Tapu in the semifinals, 2-6, 7-6 (6), 6-4. The semis game was played on the same day of the finals match, as it rained Saturday, forcing organizers to reset the Minor-Tapu tiff.

The semis game was played for around three hours and ended around 2pm. After two hours, the 13-year-old Minor challenged the 16-year-old Dugan in the title match, which concluded around 6pm. Two hours later, Minor was on a plane back to Saipan.

Another Saipan player—Vivi-

an Lee—joined the women's 5.0 singles competition, but lost to Dugan in the semifinals, 6-3, 6-4.

Kennedy was entered in the men's 2.0 singles and defeated Feng Li in the first round, 6-3, 6-0. He then topped fellow Saipan player Chris Park in the second round, 6-1, 4-6, 1-0 (6), to arrange a meeting with Kevin Lai in the third round.

Kennedy downed Lai to move into the semis against Josiah Zimmerman. Kennedy won in the semis and was awarded the runner-up medal, as he could not make it to this weekend's finals, which was originally set for last weekend but was moved due to rain.

Kennedy's mother—Vickie—played in the women's 2.0 sin-

gles and also gained finals entry before losing to Camdyn Nadler in the title game, 6-2, 4-6, 4-6.

Vickie won her first round match against Ashley Nadler, 6-1, 6-3, and then walloped Leslie Waldman, 6-1, 6-1, to advance to the finals.

Four other Saipan players joined the singles competitions in the Shirley's Open.

Nicholas Son whipped Khay Sung in the first round of the men's 5.0 singles before losing to Lency Tenai in the next round, 4-6, 1-6.

Fr. Ryan Jimenez drew a bye in the first round, but bowed to Jack Chan in the second round, 4-6, 1-6.

Chuck Sayon lost to Tae Kim in the first round of the men's

4.5 singles, while Lydia Tan also faltered in her first round match in the women's 4.0 singles, losing to Margaret Terry, 2-6, 2-6.

Shirley's Open, which is played on various courts in Guam, was set to resume action yesterday.

Guam National Tennis Federation with the support of David Lai of Shirley's Restaurants in Guam organized the Shirley's Open. For the record, Tan and Peter Loyola defeated Sam Lai and Katie Lai in the mixed 4.0 division final (not in the open division, as earlier reported). Additionally, Loyola and Khay Sung lost to Torgun Smith and Chris Blalack in the 35-and-above men's doubles semifinal round.



Cowboys release star Terrell Owens

Jerry Jones made it clear, both in action and words: Getting rid of Terrell Owens means a fresh start for the Dallas Cowboys. **25**

Saipan Tribune Sports

Melo returns and Nuggets hold off Trail Blazers

As promised, Carmelo Anthony sprinted straight to the bench when coach George Karl sent in a sub this time. **26**



28 SATURDAY, MARCH 7, 2009

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Marianas Cup kids clinic draws crowd

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

Around 60 youngsters participated in the beach volleyball clinic conducted by professional players from the United States, Japan, and Korea at the Pacific Islands Club Thursday afternoon.

The event kicked off the 17th Marianas Cup Beach Volleyball Festival.



Olympic gold medalist Phil Dalhausser, Paul

Baxter, Ji Youn Jung, Mi Hwa Shin, Su Min Jun, and Kyung Soo Shin shared their knowledge and experience of the sport.

The kids had the opportunity to learn the basics of beach volleyball such as the proper way of passing the ball, bumping, setting, and serving techniques.

Baxter led the group for a short jog around the courts, stopping around the corners to change their footing from knee-lifts to side-steps to backward-facing runs.

After that, the kids were divided into groups and worked on basic skills such as the bump



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

The beach volleyball clinic conducted by professional players, led by 2008 Beijing Olympic gold medalist Phil Dalhausser, attracted 60 youngsters. It was held Thursday afternoon at the Pacific Islands Club.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Kids had the opportunity to learn the basics of beach volleyball such as the proper way of passing the ball, bumping, setting, and serving techniques during the clinic conducted by pros.

(forearms straight, faced up with both hands clasped out in front) as the initial task.

They later transitioned to sets where Dalhausser cautioned the kids to "never let the ball spin" and to "reach high." After repeated rounds, the kids learned how to serve, both underhand and overhead.

Tournament director Jon Cramer invited the kids to watch

the pros in action on Friday evening for the free Pro Exhibition Match which begins at 5pm at PIC's beach volleyball courts.

Nakaya, 29, leads the cast of Japanese players. Standing at 6'2", he is ranked No. 5 in Japan. The Osaka native began his professional career in 2004 and his favorite pastime is billiards.

Aoki Shimpei is 28 years old and the 6'1" native of Ashiga-

rashimo-gun is currently ranked 11th in Japan.

Since 2003, Shimpei won 10 world events and over a hundred at home.

He enjoys reading historical novels and plays sepak takraw on his free time.

Shimpei then shared his talents during the kids' beach volleyball clinic along with three other Japanese stars—Yasuo Nakaya, Shinako Tanaka, and Hiromi Suzuki.

Aoki teamed up with Nakaya in the exhibition match against pros from the United States and Korea late yesterday afternoon, while Tanaka and Suzuki paired in the women's side of the show.

All the 12 professional players will be raffled off and each of them will play along side an amateur entry.

Shinako Tanaka, 33, from Saitama stands 5'8" and started her sports career in indoor volleyball, having played for the women's national team.

She finished first in a 2006 FIVB tournament in Phuket with partner, Eiko Koizumi, and together they also won the silver medal in the women's team competition at the 2006 Asian

See **MARIANAS** on Page 27

Aztecs stage late rally to beat Hustlers

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER



Team Aztecs staged an amazing rally late to beat Hustlers, 8-5, Thursday night in the Big League Division at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Baseball Field.

The Aztecs recovered from a mediocre start before spoiling Giovanni Ayuyu's

two-run homerun that gave the Hustlers a 4-0 lead in the bottom of the fourth inning.

Ayuyu's homer was the first for the Big League this year but his effort went for naught as the Aztecs roared back into contention in the last two innings for the big upset. It was their second consecutive win after dropping their first assignment.

The Aztecs started their hitting spree in the top of the sixth inning when Tim Cruz, John Welsen, and Nick Cruz reached

See **AZTECS** on Page 27

Team Aztecs starting pitcher Nick Muna grimaces in pain after he was hit by a pitch from Hustlers reliever Tony Rogolofoi Jr. in the top of the seventh inning in their Big League Division game Thursday night at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.



Minor, Izukas finalists in Shirley's Open

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

CNMI junior tennis players Thea Minor and Kennedy Izuka and the latter's mother, Vickie, made it into the finals of the singles competition in the 9th Annual Shirley's Open Tennis Tournament.

Minor joined the women's 5.0 singles



and dueled Alea Dugan in the finals Sunday. The first set of the title match was a neck-and-neck battle with Dugan escaping with a 7-5 victory.

Dugan went on to win the title after more than two hours of play, as she notched a 6-4 victory in the second set.

See **MINOR** on Page 27



Minor



Izuka

Laguna Regatta sets sail this weekend

The 34th Annual Laguna Regatta casts off this week in the warm waters of the Saipan Lagoon. The competition is the longest continuously running sporting event in the Marianas.

The 2009 Laguna Regatta will consist of up to 10 races for Hobie 16 class boats. Sponsored by the Over the Reef Yacht Club, this year's event commenced with a welcoming

party yesterday, where registration took place. Races will start with a competitors briefing at 8:30am today at Fiesta

Resort & Spa Saipan beach and continue tomorrow. The race course is set up just northeast of Managaha Island.

Spectators can catch the best view of the event from Managaha Island. Free transportation is available.

See **LAGUNA** on Page 27



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Carolinian sailors Lino Olopai, left, and Cecilio Raiukiulipiyi have fun on the Laguna Regatta race course in the 2008 event.